

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

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MAY, 1905

No. I

CONTENTS

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----|
| The Visionists | Gelett Burgess | I |
| A Song for May | Maurice Francis Egan | 51 |
| After Victory | Florence Wilkinson | 52 |
| A Real Human Play | Tom Masson | 52 |
| The Lion of Lyndon | A. Van Dwight | 53 |
| A Reminiscent Dinner | John O'Keefe | 57 |
| A Mock Sun | James Huneker | 59 |
| A Distant Spring | Charles Hanson Towne | 68 |
| The Two O'Leans | Grace MacGowan Cooke | 69 |
| Triolet to Innocenza | Richard Butler Glaenger | 74 |
| Jonquils | Mark Lee Luther | 75 |
| Trodden Hard | William B. Hills | 80 |
| On Love-Letters | Frank S. Arnett | 81 |
| A Nest of Hepaticas | Duncan Campbell Scott | 88 |
| Bifflins of Booloo | Ethel Sigsbee Small | 89 |
| On the Hilltop | Madison Cawein | 96 |
| Bessie and Miss Grey | W. J. B. Moses | 97 |
| The Motor Adventures of Lady Sibyl | Zona Gale | 101 |
| Daffodils | Natalie Bouligny Smyth | 114 |
| The Cause | Owen Oliver | 115 |
| Limitation | Mildred I. McNeal | 120 |
| Concerning Mr. Penwinkle | Virginia Woodward Cloud | 121 |
| To a Bon Vivant | Margaret Lee Ashley | 130 |
| La Folie d'un Rêve | Paul Cervières | 131 |
| Ballade of Future Times | Hayden Carruth | 134 |
| The Romance at Hollywood College | Anne O'Hagan | 135 |
| In Gadara | Clinton Scollard | 138 |
| Endemic | Gouverneur Morris | 139 |
| April | John B. Tabb | 144 |
| Australia's Lark | Frances de Wolfe Fenwick | 145 |
| A Springtime Love | Carolyn Wells | 151 |
| Stalled | Frank Roe Batchelder | 152 |
| The Empty Saddle | W. C. Morrow | 153 |
| Le Vol Suprême de l'Oiseau | Emile Hinzlein | 160 |
| Observations | Beatrice Sturges | 160 |

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"THE SMART SET" FOR JUNE

A delightful novelette will be the leading feature of the June "SMART SET," a story full of humor and clever dialogue. It is entitled,

"ON THE NEWPORT ROAD," By Sewell Ford

There will be thirteen short stories in the June number, every one of which will reach the high standard that the magazine has established. Among the authors are Edith Rickert, Edwin L. Sabin, Gertrude Lynch, Henry Sydnor Harrison, Anne O'Hagan and Anna A. Rogers.

An important article will be contributed, called

THE ART OF GIVING GRAND OPERA,

By Heinrich Conried

The poetry will be from such writers as Bliss Carman, Theodosia Garrison, Arthur Stringer, John Vance Cheney, Wallace Irwin, Elsa Barker and Ethel M. Kelley.

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THE VISIONISTS

By Gelett Burgess

FOR several moments nobody spoke. The five sat about the table staring at the dice upon the green baize cover. Nomé had thrown double-six; the number was not only decisive as to its choice of her, but in its definite extreme it seemed to affirm that no one else could possibly have been selected by Destiny. She gazed at the little cubes with wide eyes, her lips apart, and her hand laid upon her breast to still the beating of her heart. It was like a sentence of death—as if she were suddenly picked off and left alone, while the universe receded from her. But she did not blench.

Irma Strieb watched her jealously from beneath heavy auburn brows, biting her lip to conceal its sullen droop. Little Ospovat had turned clay-white about the mouth and stared glassily, as if he were about to faint. O'Brien, the Fenian, folded his arms and waited, but the beads of sweat upon his temples showed how sensitive he was to the tensity of the situation. Old Mangus, at the head of the table, pulled at his shaggy, unkempt beard, sucked at his pipe, and stared at Nomé. The dirty red fez on his head nodded slowly.

The light from the single window toward the west, casting each face into shadow, emphasized the characteristics of the group. O'Brien looked more like a bull than ever, Mangus more like a bear. Ospovat's mingled strength and weakness, affection and determination, his timidity ever lashed by his will, his effeminacy and his courage—all were plainly modeled upon his features. Irma Strieb's

harsh, mannish countenance was hardened by envy in that revelation. Nomé alone, sitting with her back to the light, shone in suffused color, with a radiant charm that penetrated the half-light and made itself felt, though shrouded from distinct vision. Behind the table the room was already dusky, and showed only a vague disorder—the cheap couch, the lithographs on the walls, and a few scattered papers on the floor making spots of color against the dingy background of gray wall-paper and dull, ragged carpet. A little wooden Swiss clock upon the mantel ticked busily on.

Mangus was the first to break the silence. He shook his gray head and growled through his beard: "I'm sorry it had to be a woman. This is a man's work!"

The color flashed into Nomé's cheek as she turned to him with new spirit. He put a hand on her arm, adding, "It's all right, Nomé; of course we can trust you, only—" Breaking off, he went to the sideboard, filled a glass with brandy, and brought it to her. Irma was still sullenly staring, and O'Brien's great mouth had fallen open like a slaving dog's. Little Ospovat's muscles were twitching.

Nomé put the glass away from her with a gesture of disdain. "Do you think—do you dare to think that I'm less able than a man to do the work?" she demanded proudly.

"Drink this!" Mangus commanded. "We'll talk afterward!"

"Give it to Ospovat—he needs it more than I do!" was her scornful reply.

The little Jew sprang to his feet.

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"Oh, Nomé, Nomé, I can't bear it! If it had only been I!" Then he sank into his chair again and dropped his head on his arms.

Nomé's eyes softened.

"One would think we had met to form a literary club!" Irma Strieb sneered. "What did you expect, Ospovat—to do what we have to do with cologne water? You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs! What are you whining at?"

"It's a serious business, just the same," O'Brien broke in. "It'll take a bit of doing, I'm thinking. You all know me, but I don't mind saying it makes me feel solemn."

"It's horrible!" cried Ospovat. "I wouldn't mind if I only had it to do myself, but to stand and look on——"

"There'll be enough to do for us all," Mangus growled. "We've only just begun. There'll be danger enough to go round, I promise you! We haven't enlisted for this thing alone, have we? It's the first stroke that tells, though, and it must be given hard and clean. I'm glad the day has come at last when we can stop talking and do things!" He took a packet of papers from his pocket and began to arrange them upon the table. Then he looked up. "You'd better all go, now," he added. "I've got something to say to Nomé."

The three arose awkwardly to take their leave, all self-conscious and embarrassed, their eyes fastened with a new curiosity upon the tall, dark, beautiful girl who had been their comrade for so long, now to go to instant peril, perhaps her death, alone.

The burly, sentimental Irishman went to her and wrung her hand in a strong grip, his eyes filling as he looked into hers. "Good-bye, Nomé, my girl," he said, choking. "I wish to God it had been me, but there's plenty left for us to do, as Mangus says. I've always been proud of you, Nomé—you'll do us credit, I'm sure. Come back to us safe—if you can!" He ran his big hand through his red hair and gazed at the wall, stupidly. Then, with a cough, he turned, went

out the door, and stumbled down one flight of stairs, there to wait for Irma.

Irma Strieb's farewell was without sentiment. Her cold, gray-blue eyes did not moisten as she looked at Nomé for what would be, in all probability, the last time. The two women had always been at variance, and even physically they presented a contrast that Irma had always resented. Irma Strieb was a German of the most uncompromising plainness, unaccented by color or delicacy of feature. Her lack of comeliness was made up for, in a way, by an almost masculine strength, shown in her firm, heavy, wilful jaw, her yellow teeth and bushy yellow hair. The lines of her figure were all flattened where Nomé's were curved in full development, and her angular joints were ill disguised by a stiff, plain and unbecoming costume.

"You won, as usual, Nomé," she said. "Of course you'll become our heroine. Someone has got to get the glory, I suppose. But so long as the Cause needs to have drudgery done, I'll be here to do it. It doesn't matter. We must have a few good wheel-horses, even if they can't address meetings and electrify audiences."

"You have already done far more than I can ever do; you have been in the Movement since I was a child," said Nomé, steadily facing Irma's look. "Chance has given me this to do, and I shall do it as well as I can, but I wish I had done half as much as you have done, through all those first dark days, when you were almost alone!"

"Well, good-bye, then," said Irma coldly. "Come, Ospovat, let's go now!" She cast a contemptuous look at the little Russian. Then, as he shook his head sadly, she left the room deliberately, to meet O'Brien on the floor below.

Little Ospovat crept to Nomé's side like a hound and kissed her hand repeatedly, almost prostrated by his emotion and the intensity of his Slavonic temperament. Nomé put her hand on his curly head, then raised him, to kiss him upon the cheek. He

was trembling violently, far more distraught than she. He left her without a word, his eyes on her to the last. The door closed softly behind him.

There was a hush in the cold, drearily furnished room, and the twilight had fallen, filling the place with shadows. Mangus still sat at the table, intent upon his papers. Nomé walked to the window to watch the orange light of the western sky flooding the jumble of London roofs and chimneys. She was calm now, but before Mangus spoke she must be calmer still. For the credit of her sex, for her own justification, she must not only carry this thing through successfully, but brilliantly, gallantly, as a man would do it.

She had been for several years in sympathy with the Movement, but had joined this most radical branch only a few months previously. Since entering the Circle she had carried all before her—all, that is, but Mangus, the brains and will of the conspiracy. Little Ospovat had been won at a glance, and O'Brien almost as easily; most of the others had been fascinated by the beautiful, spirited American girl who had so enlivened their meetings with a new charm and a new romance. Her enthusiasm had been picturesque and piquant. She had given her mind, her energy as well as her fortune to the Cause, but Mangus was too wise to trust anyone without a trial. She felt his distrust even when it was not expressed, and his apparent admiration of her beauty was scarcely less distasteful to her than his cynical comments upon her flamboyant emotions.

He looked up from his papers, at last, to see Nomé silhouetted against the dormer window, dark, gracile, ultra-feminine. As he watched her, she was never quite still. Every passing thought was written upon her face; her expression changed continually, urged by her conflicting emotions. Her hands worked convulsively, reflexing sudden moods of thought, her breath came suddenly or stopped as,

in the intensity of her feeling, she went over the past and present and future. Woman as she was in intellect, she was but a child in emotional schooling—that was, perhaps, her final charm, the ingenuousness which was so marked as almost to seem like an affectation.

He went up to her and laid a hand upon her shoulder gently. She started, as if she had been summoned from the depths of consciousness, looked at him with a startled expression, then smiled graciously. She seemed younger than usual tonight. This last hour, when the theories of her life were to be unleashed into action, had not as yet touched her nerves.

"I didn't mean to doubt you, Nomé," he began. "We all know how true you are, none better than I, who have watched you from the beginning. You're prepared to die for the Cause, and you'll do your part as well as you can. It's only this that worries me—you're a woman, and I fear you've not yet killed that woman's heart of yours. You must kill that heart, Nomé, before you leave this room tonight. You may think you have given yourself to the Movement, body and soul; you may not have had a thought outside this matter since you first came to us, but you're a woman still—I could tell that by the way you kissed little Ospovat. A woman may often do bigger things than a man, but she often does littler things, too. You've done with the woman's battle of the heart against the brain. You've surrendered all right to a personal life. You belong to the Cause, without a will of your own, without desires or sympathies or emotions apart from the righting of a great wrong. As a nun gives herself to God when she takes the veil, so you gave yourself to Humanity when you took the oath. Your life may be wrecked this night, but the Cause, God bless it, will go on!"

She had kept her eyes on the sanguine glory of the sunset as he spoke, but she turned, now, her face bathed in the reddening light, her eyes on fire.

"Do you need to tell me this?" she cried. "Do you need to bolster up my courage—*mine*? Don't I know all this as well as you?" she exclaimed almost fiercely.

He met her gaze calmly. "How did you happen to join the Movement?" he inquired.

The color surged to her face, and she put her hand to her heart. "Because—because I became interested in the Cause—because I believed it was right and just and noble—why do you ask me? Why does anyone join, else? Why did you?"

"Have you ever had a love-affair, a serious one?" Mangus put the question as one who has the right to ask, and, in the conflict of wills, he won.

"Yes," she whispered, looking down.

"It was an unhappy affair?"

"Yes," she repeated.

"And for that reason, perhaps, you entered the Movement?"

"Yes," a third time.

Mangus brought his hand down on the table with a shock that startled the girl. "There you are again! It's always the way! Why can't a woman devote herself to a noble, righteous thing, because of its own compelling influence, because of its own human demand, instead of waiting till her heart is broken? I tell you, girl, that when a woman's heart is broken her will is broken, too! Otherwise she'd conquer this fetish worship of the emotions. A woman with a broken heart is never safe. It's well called a broken heart—she is weakened by it, in will and in mind. God! I've seen them—women studying the training for nurses in the hospitals, going in for philanthropy, sociology or religion, or joining the Movement—all on account of cardiac fracture! Using the finest and noblest of human endeavors as a mere anesthetic! Isn't our Cause sublime enough to attract one whole heart, one happy life, from pure altruistic motives? How can I trust a woman if there is even one man in the world who can call himself her master?"

"You know I am resolved!" Nomé

cried indignantly. "You know how I have burned at the thought of the injustice and the tyranny of all I see about me. You know how I hate the social system that forces this outrageous condition upon us—is not that enough?"

"Ah, that is not calmness, Nomé!" he replied. "You must forget all that now. It is true enough, but it is the talk for the platform, not for the thrower of a double-six. Keep to the scientific view. Our reform is inevitable—we do but make ready the day. This assassination must be differentiated from every sporadic attempt that has ever been made. It must be done with coolness and deliberation to have any effect. It must be one step in a chain of action, as mechanically performed as the stroke of the pen which drives the price of wheat up another point. You are not chosen to wreak poetic vengeance. Yours must not be the act of one burning with the wrongs of humanity, so much as the official act of a political plot, working logically to a positive end."

"I am in your hands," was Nomé's reply. "Have I not given my oath? You are dictator here. Command me!"

"Tell me something about your love-affair first."

Nomé spoke as to a confessor, rapidly and in a low voice. "He was George Camish, an Englishman, who expected before long to come into a title—I don't know what. I met him at home, in New York. I loved him, and thought he loved me. Then we quarreled, and since that I have never heard from him. That's all."

"But you cannot forget?" Mangus questioned coldly.

"No, I cannot forget." Nomé's words were scarcely audible.

"What if you were asked to kill him?"

"I should kill him."

There came a knock at the door. Mangus stalked to it in a rage. Little Ospovat, white-faced and trembling, a ridiculous figure in his large hat and

ill-fitting overcoat, was upon the threshold.

"I thought you would be through, and Nomé would be alone," he whimpered. "I wanted to see her once more—for the last time!"

"Get out!" Mangus cried fiercely.

Ospovat retreated, with his bright eyes still searching the gloom.

"There's another of your little tuppenny love-affairs!" said Mangus. "How dares anyone bring his personal feelings into this room at such a time! Yet little Ospovat there, more a woman than you are, is more a man than some of us. I'd be surer of him than of O'Brien. There's stuff in that little Jew, for all his sentiment. I'll use him well, when *his* time comes!"

"He's a mere child," said Nomé, "but he's pure gold!"

"Gold!" muttered Mangus. "This is no esthetic Movement! What we want is steel, cold steel! Files and saws and knives and hammers are our tools. Phlebotomy, Nomé, phlebotomy is our game. Letting a little blood for the good of the race."

"Let us finish our business," pleaded Nomé, overcome by his taunts. "Whether I am worthy or not, this night will prove. If I still have a heart I have honor as well, and my mind is clear. I have given myself, my life, my soul to this Cause. I can strike, were it my mother who was to be the victim!"

"Listen, then," Mangus said, growing more gentle. "You're young. You've had your longings and your illusions; this is your chance for eternal peace. I envy you that. Let me give you what I can of my own strength, for you'll need all of your own, and more. One last word, then, before the final instructions.

"Our business tonight is to shock the whole world—to bring the land to its senses, if it has any—to compel men to gaze at a great evil, that it may, in time, be righted. By means of what men call a crime we shall force the recognition and discussion of what is, in the eyes of God, a far greater crime, the enslavement of a whole people.

Ours is a war, and we employ the methods of warfare. Some believe that the general condition of mankind must needs improve slowly, laboriously, painfully, inch by inch, like the motion of a screw. We believe, you and I, that the only possible advance is by shock and conflict, by sudden leaps forward, like the wheel and ratchet, every step gained being a gain for all time. So civilization has always progressed by bloody wars, by fierce sacrifices of human life, by noble crimes. The man we have marked for death happens to be the one most in the way of liberty; yet it is not the man you are to kill, but the officer, the social system which he enforces. He may even be, according to his own standards and conventional moralities, good and just; but his life must be given that the people shall at last be free. His life—and perhaps yours!"

The dusk had grown closer, shrouding the chamber in gloom. Now Mangus arose and lighted the lamp. His manner changed. His speech was sharp and crisp as he spread the papers before her.

"See here. This is Westchester Square. You are to take your position here, where I have marked this cross, in the doorway of Number 11. Here is the Junior Arts Club, on the corner. At about one o'clock a man will come out of that club and walk across the square in your direction. You are to shoot that man. Wait till he is so near that you can't possibly miss him. Speak to him, if necessary, and fire at least three shots to make sure that the work is done."

"Who is he?" Nomé asked coolly.

"Lord Felvex, recently appointed Minister of Police. You will know him by a fur cap, a heavy frogged overcoat and a gold-handled stick. He wears a mustache. You can't mistake him, for we've made sure of his plans. He has agreed to meet someone in the vicinity at one o'clock tonight, and it's too near for him to need a cab."

Nomé took the pistol he handed her and watched him while he explained

its action. He loaded it carefully. Next, he went over the plan for her escape. It was not till then that her attention wandered. She would never reach that waiting cab, she knew, and that part of the plot did not interest her. It seemed base to discuss her own safety. She was resolved to die.

"It is strange that you should have been chosen for this work," Mangus remarked after all the details had been arranged. "Before the lots were drawn in the Central Circle I felt sure that you would be the one. When the dice were thrown here tonight, I knew as well as if I had been told, that you would throw the highest. And yet, I would have preferred a man—Ospovat, or O'Brien. I could have used you to better advantage elsewhere, and I assure you that your work would have been equally perilous."

Nomé resented the repetition of his suspicion the more that it was coupled with the hint in regard to her beauty. He had tried before to enlist her in the crafty diplomacy of the Circle, where her appearance could be used to advantage, but her pride in her own determination had always denied him. She did not wish to be regarded as a woman, fit only for a woman's work; she longed passionately for an equal chance with the rest to do all that required will and nerve. Yet she had never quite convinced Mangus of her strength. It was not enough for her, now, that she would prove herself in two hours; her vanity demanded that she should bring him to her feet immediately. She could not bear not to be, even now, the heroine, equal to him in determination and coolness. She had already begun to act, to take her pose before the world. A way came to her mind to compel his admiration.

"Suppose we play a game of chess," she suggested. "I have plenty of time yet, and we have never played off our rubber. Let's see which is the better man."

The two had played often and were about equal in skill. To concentrate her mind, now, in such a crisis of her life, upon the complex strategy of the

game was a *tour de force* that he knew how to admire. His own indomitable will could scarcely have gone further.

"Very well," he said, smiling in spite of himself at her ingenuous bid for admiration. "But I warn you, I'll not spare you. Take the white; I'm rather anxious to see your attack."

They were neither of them experts at chess, but had begun the study of it together and had succumbed together to its fascinations; both felt its excitement.

"It's a game of conspiracy," Mangus had often said, "and there's two kinds of conspirator. My kind is the Fabian policy—mobilize your force with deliberation, manoeuvre with discretion, await your chance to pierce the enemy's defense. Yours is the other sort—strike hard and fast, take chances, force the attack always and finish in a whirl of glory or in the dust of defeat. It's the game I'm interested in; it's the winning you care for. But we need both sorts in the Cause. The supreme conspirator has a dash of both in him—discretion and recklessness, and, above all, a sane, swift recognition of opportunity." So he watched eagerly tonight for the significant move which should disclose her opening.

His eye lit, and he smiled with satisfaction as her moves developed the Muzio gambit, with its bold initial sacrifice of the knight. He accepted her piece and awaited her attack upon his king's flank. The opening must be pressed home rapidly and vigorously to gain with an inferior force, and one error in the player's analysis of the situation, one misstep in tactics often forfeits the game. Mangus opposed her craftily, but her play was sure.

Nomé was more beautiful than usual tonight. It was "her day," as women say, and the excitement had given her a splendid color. She had taken off her stock and opened the top of her gown at the neck to give herself freedom. Mangus smiled as she rolled up the right sleeve of her shirt waist; Nomé's arm was perfect, and her one conscious coquetry was in the use of her hands.

Mangus reached over the board and felt her hand. "You're cold!" he said. "But, good God, what a beautifully feminine creature you are, Nomé! It is a pity to throw you away on a man's work. Oh, I could use those black eyes and that black hair where they'd cut keener than daggers! What do you say if now we rearrange matters?"

"Mate in three moves!" she announced icily.

"You've beaten me, Nomé!" he said, rising after a look at the board. "Chess is the next to the greatest game in the world—war is greatest. We'll see what skill you have at *that*."

He took up the revolver and examined it thoughtfully.

"I wonder if you'll be able to handle this as well as you handled your rooks," he said. "The question now is, can you press this trigger at just the right time and point this barrel in just the right direction—that the ratchet may slip forward another notch?"

II

For five minutes after Mangus had gone Nomé sat gazing out into the dark of the west, over the city roofs and the dull, sullen, smoke-stained walls, pierced with lighted windows. The old man's cynical distrust of women had put her on her mettle, and, although she had no distrust of herself, she longed to have it over.

It was with a shock that, since throwing the winning dice, she had awakened to a sense of the enormous difference between the work of an agitator and that of an active conspirator. She had so long practiced with the catchwords of the movement and had gone so often over the old, well-known arguments, that she had long ago come to believe herself a creature of action. The sacrifice for which she had long been ready had seemed like an accomplished fact—she saw no difference between the willingness to die and death itself, so commonplace had her heroics become in her mind.

But now—it was so different! The

crisis had come and she had been called upon to do actually what she had so often pictured herself as doing. Her time and place were set. It was for her to fall at this first ditch and let the Movement sweep on without her. The others would carry on the propaganda of the Cause, filling up the ranks where she had dropped. Ospovat, O'Brien, Irma Strieb, all would meet as usual in that room to plan new strokes, and, perhaps, go forth, one by one, to die like her. It seemed so hard that she could not do more, besides this night's work, for the Cause. She envied Mangus, not his safety, but his isolated supremacy in the Council, his prospect of seeing the Cause grow in power.

She was interrupted by a knock, and, before she had time to answer, little Ospovat crept into the room, apologetic and shrinking. He stumbled in a hole in the carpet and fell at full length. Nomé smiled to think that he was almost always either ridiculous or pathetic, and gave him a patronizing welcome. She was fond of him, but could never take him seriously; he was pure gold, as she had said, but he was, to her mind, but half a man—a child whose moods she was wont to indulge. But, after Mangus's insinuations, it heartened her to see someone who believed in her implicitly, as Ospovat always had done, always would do.

"I couldn't bear not to see you again, Nomé," he said. "And, oh, Nomé, I can't bear to have you die tonight! Nomé, Nomé, I have come to ask you something! Let me go in your place and do it! I am a man, and it does not matter about me—they can spare me so well—but you are so wonderful! You must not go, Nomé!"

He knelt before her, and she petted him like a sister. "It can't be, Ospovat," she said soothingly. "I have been chosen, and I must go. You know I have sworn not to disclose what I have to do tonight. How could I tell even you? I must do this thing. It is glorious, and I am happy to be able to give my life for the Cause!"

"Ah, but I am not happy!" he moaned, laying his head in her lap.

"Do you think I shall fail?" she inquired, knowing well what he would say, but longing for his trust.

"No! no!" he cried. "You will be a heroine! You cannot fail—you, who are so wonderful! But you are so beautiful, too!"

"Don't, Ospovat!" she exclaimed.

"And I love you—*love* you, Nomé!" he went on boldly.

"You must not say that!" she said, freeing herself from his hands. "What have you or I to do with love? Haven't you sworn that nothing shall come between you and the Cause? Haven't I? We have no right to any personal life, any personal taste, feeling or thought! You must not speak a word of this to me!"

"I will speak, Nomé—I must! It may be the last time I shall ever see you. I must tell you that I love you—that I have loved you ever since you came to us. You are a divine creature to me, so far above me that I want no return, no answer, even, only to let you know. And I cannot bear to have you die! You could never care for me, and so it is better, far better, that I should die, not you, who are so wonderful. If you should die, what would I do!"

"Poor boy, I am so sorry!" she said sadly. "But you must not talk so. It is decided, and it is wrong for you to distract me now, when I have so much to think of, when I need all my calmness to do what is to be done. You must throw yourself more into the Cause, and forget."

"Have you forgotten, Nomé?" he asked keenly.

"Forgotten what?"

"Forgotten your love, your heart, your sorrow."

"What do you know of that?"

"How do I know? Can I look at you and not see? Haven't I seen your eyes fill with tears and your hand go to your heart? You could not have that look in your face without having loved and suffered, as I suffer now. Look in my eyes, and you will

see the same look there. I know—how well I know! I do not expect you to care for me—I never expected it. I am only little Ospovat, the Russian Jew! But I love you, all the same; and loving you, I have understood you. Is it not true, Nomé?"

"Yes," she said, "it is true."

"Then you, too, can understand how hard it is for me to let you go to-night!"

"You *must* let me go!" she cried. "Would you have me dishonored? You see for yourself how your words affect me, and you should not speak of this to me. I don't want to think of myself at all, tonight, least of all think of—what you have spoken of. I had to answer Mangus, and it nearly killed me! I can't bear it!"

"You will not let me go in your place?" he repeated.

"No, I cannot. I would not, if I could. I owe this to the Cause, and to myself, too, for I must be tried and proven, or what does all my work count for?"

"Let me go with you, then! Let me take the pistol and give myself up, while you escape. You could do so much for the Cause!"

"It is too late!"

He moaned, and threw himself into a seat by the table, dropping his head in his arms. She went up to him again, and touched him gently. "It is very sweet to have you love me so much, Ospovat," she said. "But I am past all that, and my heart is broken. I shall be glad to die."

"Is it so bad with you?" he said, looking up into her face. "He must have been wonderful, to inspire such a one as you to love him!"

"Indeed he was wonderful—to me."

"And he left you? How could anyone ever leave you!"

"We quarreled. Then he left. Sometimes I have thought that he quarreled on purpose, so that he might go without hurting me so much."

"Can't I do something for you, Nomé, before you go out into danger? I might take a message to him from you."

"No, that's useless. When he hears how I have died that will be message enough for him. He will know."

"It is well; I would kill him if I saw him."

"That would be a poor way to serve me," Nomé said, smiling sadly.

The little Swiss clock on the mantel struck midnight. The two listened, Ospovat trembling, till it had finished. Then Nomé looked at him meaningly. He rose and gazed at her fixedly, then knelt and kissed her hand.

"Farewell, Nomé!" he said quickly.

After he had gone she sat for some time listlessly, then arose with a brisk resolve. She put on her hat and coat and placed the revolver carefully inside her muff. Finally, turning out the light, she went downstairs and opened the front door on Fitzroy street. A cab had just passed. As it turned the corner into Grafton street, she walked slowly down the steps and across the pavement to the curb. Soon after the cab reappeared from the opposite direction and halted where she stood. Opening the door, without speaking to the driver, Nomé stepped in.

As the vehicle passed into Charlotte street, a little man, slinking in the shadow, ran out and swung himself on the rear of the cab. The driver did not notice.

III

It was nearly one o'clock when Nomé, having left the cab some blocks away and walked alone to the appointed spot, reached the shelter of the doorway where she was to await the Minister of Police.

The public-houses had closed, turning the last wayfarers upon the night. The streets were deserted now, unvisited except by the solitary policeman who proceeded silently down the rows of sleeping houses, illuminating the doors with his dark-lantern. From her post in the shadow no one was visible. Occasionally she heard the echoing, padded beat of horses' hoofs and the distant jangle of cab bells,

and then silence fell upon the place. The electric lamp in the little triangular square flooded the vicinity with light, the sizzling arcs casting an uncertain shadow of the standards, as the spark spluttered and burned violet again. The doorway where she stood was hid in darkness. Opposite her was the clubhouse, the cut-glass in its front doors sparkling with refracted rays.

A belated serving-maid passed, on the other side of the street, with her "follower." At the lower door of her house there was a colloquy in whispers. The man whistled, and, after a wait, an upper window was opened. A woman threw down a key, laughing aloud. The maid entered and her escort withdrew. The square was still again.

As Nomé waited there, revolver in hand, her mind was full of the advice Mangus had given her. His phrase—the ratchet and the screw—came back to her like a watchword. But the intellectual stigma he had put upon her sex still aroused her scornful resentment. She would prove its injustice. She thought of women whose example might inspire her—and she thought, too, of some whose hearts had triumphed over their heads, in the supreme trial. She recalled one such, in Germany, who had relinquished her purpose at the sound of a crying babe. What had become of her? What had life to offer for one so recreant to the trust of her one greatest moment?

But had Nomé herself killed her heart as Mangus had doubted? Indeed, had it not been killed for her when George Camish left her? How else could she have gone into the movement—how could she have taken the oath, if her heart had not been withered three years ago?

Quick, now! The door of the clubhouse opened and two men appeared. No, it was not the minister.

She must not allow her mind to wander. This was no time for subjective analysis, no time for her to doubt herself. The work tonight was the climax of her life. Nothing else

mattered, for she would prove herself. In another hour all would be answered.

Suddenly she noticed two men loitering on the opposite side of the street. She watched them curiously, nervously, thinking at first that they might be members of the Circle, ready to assist her escape. But all the prominent members of the Movement were already known to the police, and their appearance at this time would not only be dangerous to themselves but would endanger the success of the conspiracy. Her second thought was that the plot had become known, and that these men were detectives prepared to thwart her attack. The next instant, however, their true character was revealed in a series of rapid events.

Crossing the street together, they stationed themselves so near her that she could almost hear their whispered words. Then there was a subdued exclamation of attention as, across the square, the door of the clubhouse opened and a man appeared. Before her eyes had recognized the fur cap, the mustache and the frogged overcoat, her heart's beating and the choking in her throat had told her that it was the minister. She heard him call "Good night!" and the door was slammed. He walked rapidly across the square toward her. Nomé held her pistol ready, her finger trembling upon the trigger.

The men she had been watching were now between her and the approaching victim as he came on briskly, swinging his stick. Then, to her surprise and horror, the two, who had been pretending to light a cigarette one from the other, whirled upon Lord Felvex with violence. The attack was so rapid and so fierce that he was caught unprepared, and was quite at their mercy. He did not even cry out for help. He was struck down almost immediately, and then attacked with a ferocity so cruel that Nomé's blood boiled. She saw blow after blow rained upon him, then all thought of her own purpose was swept away in an overmastering desire to save him from this deadly peril. In another instant

he would have been beaten into insensibility.

She ran out with her revolver drawn, and, leveling deliberately at one of the footpads, fired. He fell in his tracks, and she turned instantly to the other. Lord Felvex had rolled over and was attempting to rise; Nomé caught one glance at his bleeding face. That sight so increased her excitement that her second shot went wild. In a flash the robber was upon her and felled her violently to the ground with a blow upon the chest. She fell upon her arm and head, and swooned.

When she came to herself little Ospovat was kneeling beside her, whispering wildly into her ear. There was a tumult in the square—a cordon of police was driving a gathering crowd back out of the way—orders were being cried out—men were running up from every direction. Across the street lighted windows were thrown up, and men and women were gazing down upon the trouble. What had happened? At first she was too faint and ill to remember. . . .

Had the minister been killed? Had the ratchet slipped up another notch? Was she now the heroine of the Cause? Then her memory came back in a flood of shame at her failure—and came with a recurrence of the excitement she had felt when she saw Lord Felvex's face. Her head was resting upon an overcoat, she was bleeding, her left arm was numb, her chest filled with a stinging ache when she breathed, but she felt no cold, no pain worth troubling her—only the wretchedness of a wasted opportunity, a sense of failure, and, through it all, a wonder and a puzzled horror at the minister, at Lord Felvex whom she knew now so well! She wished that she had died.

"You couldn't help it, dear Nomé!" Ospovat was saying under his breath. "Of course there was no other way! I watched you from the corner, and I know you were ready. I shall tell them at the Circle—I shall say that you would have done it. Those damned robbers spoiled everything—

but you shall have another chance! I shall help you next time! I shall give my life with yours, Nomé."

He was wiping the blood from her face as he whispered, kissing her brow, chafing her wrists, abandoned to grief at the sight of her condition. Nomé had not strength enough to speak, scarcely enough to think upon the complication of her woes. She had failed, failed, failed! How Mangus would sneer at her! And Lord Felvex—she was too bewildered to follow out that thought.

Ospovat was torn from her side as two policemen brought up a surgeon from a house across the street. Nomé saw, languidly, as in a dream, that he had his nightshirt still on under his coat, and he wore no stockings. Then a voice—a voice that she knew so well!—thrilled her through the babel of noises.

"Never mind me! Let me alone, damn you! I can stand all right. Get a carriage and take that girl to my house. Send for Sir Thomas Burroughs immediately—don't wait for an ambulance! By Jove! that girl is a brick, whoever she is. She's to be taken direct to my house!"

IV

FOR three weeks Nomé was too ill to realize her position at the Felvex house; she saw no one but her physician and nurses. Intervals of fever prevented her from noticing the attentions by which she was favored, and in these times her mind reverted continually to the stress of thought which had immediately followed her adventure.

As soon as she began to recover her health and strength, however, she wondered at the consideration which she received. She was in a beautifully furnished room with alternate day and night nurses to wait upon her, often and most cordially visited by her doctor, the celebrated Sir Thomas Burroughs, who treated her with a cheerful and interested kindness that

charmed her. The table by her bed was kept constantly supplied with fresh flowers. Everything that she could wish for, or that could be anticipated for her, was done, with the exception that she received no information as to what had happened during the interval of her illness. There was something significant in the deference with which she was treated, and she could not quite understand it. The first message she received was from Lady Felvex, inquiring as to her health, and expressing a wish to call upon her. Then, little by little, she learned from her nurse how matters stood.

She had become a popular heroine. She was shown papers with accounts of the episode at Westchester Square, extolling her courage in defending the minister. His social and official prominence had combined with her own beauty to make the affair notorious. The illustrated weeklies contained pictures of the incident, with photographs of Lord Felvex. Here she read his biography, and some of the events in his past explained the reason for his behavior when she had known him in New York.

There, having refused to make use of his courtesy title of "Honorable" during his visit to the United States, he had been known by his family name of Camish. He had been engaged to the present Lady Felvex for four years, not having married her until he had come into his uncle's title. She understood, now, why he had invented their one-sided quarrel, why he had left her, why he had never spoken to her as she had hoped to have him speak. She had loved him, and no doubt he had become more and more fond of her. When he saw how matters were tending he had taken the most considerate way of parting with her. She had no reproaches for him; it was his right, for they had never come to any definite understanding. She had loved him and had gone more than halfway in the affair. There had been a swift, keen friendship. That was all, so far as he was concerned, though she had taken it much more seriously. It was

all simple enough, common enough; it was one of a thousand similar cases, yet her heart had broken.

No one, at first, knew who she was, for Lord Felvex had not had time to recognize her during the fracas that night, and she had few friends in London outside the Circle. This mystery had increased the picturesqueness of her situation and had stimulated the curiosity of the public. She began to receive hundreds of letters of congratulation. Flowers, fruits, delicacies and presents of all description were showered upon her by unknown admirers of her gallantry. It was apparent that she was no common woman of the streets, and it was surmised that she was an American, although the reason for her being in that vicinity, alone and armed, caused much inquisitive comment.

The iron entered Nomé's soul at the first realization of her anomalous situation. To have failed in her appointed purpose was agony enough for her proud spirit, but to receive this tribute of praise for an act which, to her, represented only her weakness, was an exquisite anguish.

With all the adulation which she had begun to receive, and which, as she became convalescent, she would receive in fuller measure, she must hold her tongue and play the hypocrite, humiliated by the cruel falsity and injustice of her part. She must bide her time; there were too many interests at stake for her to protest at her hostess's bounty. Not only the safety of her friends but the danger to the Cause itself kept her silent, and behind this was the chance for her own redemption—if she ever had the courage to redeem herself from this failure.

So she received the flattery and favors which were for her the bitterest mockery. She had been human enough to anticipate the notoriety that would become hers—the vilification, the persecution, the crown of thorns—but she would have had the glory, too, of having struck for Humanity, not this cheap romance of an accidental rescue. Harder to bear than this was the

thought of how the Circle would regard her action. The better part, including Mangus, perhaps, might admit that she did rightly, for the sordid crime of the footpads, dignified by no noble motive, unauthorized by any revolutionary tribunal, could surely mean nothing to the propaganda of the Cause.

Yet she knew that one faction at least—that to which O'Brien, the Fenian, belonged—would never forgive her. They held a personal quarrel with the minister who had stood in their way, and had made many of the Circle suffer. O'Brien himself had been warmly fond of her, but she knew his hot Irish blood; he was capable of turning on her the instant their wills diverged.

She could never show herself in the Circle until she had reinstated herself, in her own opinion and theirs, as a heroine. She had gone to her errand of death with confidence and determination and had failed; the next time, with the knowledge of her weakness of will, with the knowledge, too, of what Lord Felvex was to her, it would be intolerably harder. In the drama, in all the stories she had ever read, love had always conquered. Must it always be so? Could she not prove that there was something higher than love, something above duty, even—the divine principle of sacrifice?

So she went over it again and again, torturing herself with misgivings. The tumult in her soul kept her weak, and its symptoms of distress for awhile baffled her physician. But she was young and hardy, and day by day her strength slowly returned. There came a time, at last, when she was informed that Lady Felvex was to be admitted.

Nomé's hostess was a quiet, modest woman of thirty, with a plumpness that was still more girlish than matronly and a calmness that instantly inspired confidence. Her hair was dark and straight, simply arranged, without pretense to style; her eyes were clear, deep blue and steady. Her level brows and wide, well-cut mouth betokened great magnanimity and a

peace of mind that ill accorded with a certain awkwardness and carelessness in her carriage. She seemed serene in spirit and sure in thought, but self-conscious as to her physical appearance. The cordial friendliness of her manner seemed to be kept in check lest it should become too frank and candid.

She came directly to the girl, kissed her on the forehead, then sat down and took her hand.

"What can I say to you?" she said. "You who saved my husband's life! It was wonderful of you; you don't know how I admire you. It has been a long time to wait to see you, and there was so little I could do! If there is anything you will tell me, won't you?" She paused to run her fingers through Nomé's dark, rippling hair.

"You have been too kind—you have done too much already," the girl replied. "It is very strange to find myself here in your house. It was very good of you and Lord Felvex, but I am sure it was quite unnecessary. I hope I shall not trouble you long."

"You must not talk that way, Miss Destin," Lady Felvex implored. "Nothing we may do can begin to express the friendliness we feel. Besides, my husband has told me that you and he are old friends. It could not have turned out more fortunately for us, for I am so glad to see you, of whom I have heard so much. Let us forget what you have done, if you prefer it, and stay with us only as a most welcome visitor. We succeeded in finding your address, and I have already sent for your things. If there is anything else that you need I trust you will let me know. Aren't there any messages I can have sent for you—any friends that you would like to see?"

"Nothing, thank you," was the reply. "I know very few people in London, though if I think of anything I'll tell you; but I cannot accept your hospitality, Lady Felvex, any longer than is absolutely necessary. You have been exceedingly considerate of my feelings and I am not ungrateful, but it is very important for me to leave

as soon as possible. I have a great deal to do and little time in which to do it."

"I don't intend to embarrass you in any way," said Lady Felvex, rising. "You must feel at perfect liberty to do whatever you choose; but be sure of your welcome in any event. And I don't intend to tire you any longer. There are many of my friends who are most anxious to see you, Miss Destin—really, you have become quite famous. As soon as you are feeling stronger perhaps they may amuse you. But remember that you are to feel perfectly free while you are in my house."

She had scarcely left before a box of flowers was brought to the door of the room. The package was opened by the nurse, who placed a sheaf of red roses in her patient's hands. Nomé had a child's fondness for flowers, and pressed the wet, odorous blossoms to her lips and face with pleasure. Separating the stems she noticed a small sealed envelope attached to the ribbon which bound them, and opened it, with a mild curiosity to know the name of the donor. There was a card inclosed, on which was written in Mangus's fine, precise hand the words:

Remain and await orders.

This message came like a sudden blow, making her realize afresh the critical position in which she was placed. She nerved herself again, to be ready when her next opportunity came; for Mangus evidently still trusted her. Blotting out her sense of the hypocrisy of her position as the guest of Lady Felvex, eclipsing even the rising excitement at the thought of again meeting her lover, the inspiring feeling that she was to be a heroine of the Cause bathed her in new resolve. She pledged herself again to the Movement and all the bitter martyrdom with which it must try her.

V

Soon after the visit of Lady Felvex the minister himself had asked for

permission to see his guest. Nomé had been awaiting and dreading this meeting for days. The doctor had noticed her excitement when the call was mentioned, and though he could not interpret Nomé's perturbation, it was evident to his trained eye that something more than ordinary embarrassment affected her. The meeting was postponed, therefore, until he was surer of his patient.

But it could not long be delayed. Nomé's vigorous youth was rapidly demonstrating its power, the color had come into her cheeks and the freshness of her beauty was restored. The time soon came when in courtesy she could not refuse to see her host.

The situation, besides being false, was complicated by so many considerations that she had lost herself in the subtleties of it. Had he been merely a former acknowledged lover it would have been bad enough, but she had to remember all that his leaving her must mean. She must endure his pity for her as one who had fallen in love with him; one with whom he had been forced to break by means of an artifice of transparent chivalry. It took all the inspiration she could derive from the Cause, to enable her to forget the personal side of the coming event. Besides all this, there was a fluttering apprehension of alarm in her breast—a fear that these three years had not cooled her sufficiently for her to withstand the sway he had always had over her.

She was sitting in her reclining-chair when he entered, her black hair plaited and loosely drawn about her head, emphasizing her youthful appearance, despite the sadness that had come into her dark eyes. Out of the long, flowing sleeves of her gown, her little round arm emerged, and her slender hands plucked nervously at a bouquet of red roses in her lap. All else was lost in billows of cream-colored crêpe and cascades of old lace.

The color surged to her cheeks as she caught her first glance at him—and she blushed again to feel that guilty, revealing wave of emotion.

The uneasy slumber in her eyes had fled, and they leaped at him with almost an embrace in their eagerness. In that first glance she recognized all the old familiar charms, and noted as sharply every little change that three years had brought to his former distinction of form and bearing. A few new wrinkles about the eyes and a slight whitening of the hair about his temples had added much to the impression of strength and dignity he carried. What had been before but frankness and directness of manner was now tempered to power and resolve. But otherwise, he was the same keen, shrewd, liberal-minded man, still preserving much of his straightforward eagerness and freshness.

All this Nomé saw in one longing look; then her eyes fell. She made herself smile, and raised her glance to him again. There was so much she must not say to him that she dreaded to speak.

Lord Felvex said nothing until he had walked over to her chair and taken her hand; then, "Nomé, is it really you?" he almost whispered.

"No," she replied steadily, "not the Nomé you once knew, at least!"

"Who, then?" he asked, surprised at her tone. "Surely my friend—you have proved that most wonderfully!"

"I have proved nothing—yet," she answered. "It was an accident." She chose her words carefully, hoping that some time he would remember them, and understand.

"It was a most fortunate accident for me, then," he went on. "Nomé, of course I can't thank you for such an action as yours; it would be absurd, but I must say something. And I thank God that it was you who did it! But it's all so strange and unreal! I can't understand it. The coincidence was marvelous! To think that you, you, *you*, Nomé, happened to be at that particular place, at that particular moment, and alone—and armed, too!" He gave her this chance for explanation, without appearing to question her.

She perceived his unasked query, and could do nothing better than ignore it. So far as it was possible, in the tangled web that was woven about her, she would be honest with him. She could at least be silent, if that were possible; though, if the Cause demanded it, she must lie with all her might.

"It *was* a strange coincidence, wasn't it?" she said, with a smile that forbade his going on.

There were depths and shallows for her in any direction the conversation might turn, but most of all she feared to run aground on the discussion of their past acquaintance. Her pride forbade that, and she bent her wits to steer him away from any reference to it.

"You have been very good to me, Lord Felvex," she began. "It is I who should thank you for what you have done for me!"

He laughed outright. "By Jove, that *is* carrying politeness rather far, isn't it? If I had had the least idea you were in London, you would have been here visiting my wife long ago! Is your sister Alixe here?"

"No; she is still in New York."

"And your mother?" He looked puzzled.

"My mother also. I am here alone. I am studying—" She could, at the moment, think of no other subterfuge. But, with the natural frankness of her manner, the lameness of her explanation was patent, and Lord Felvex courteously forbore to inquire further.

"Well, at all events, now you are here, here you must stay. You had better make up your mind to that! Lady Felvex will be delighted. She knows we are old friends," he added tentatively. "I know what pleasure she will have in knowing you."

"Lady Felvex is charming! We shall most certainly be friends. She has already asked me to be her guest, but I am afraid it will not be possible—at least, not for long. I have much to do."

"You are not leaving London soon, I hope?"

"I can't say. But I must leave before long."

"To travel, I suppose?"

"Yes—to travel." She smiled as she thought what the phrase meant to her.

"Well, it's good to see you again, Nomé," he said, honestly trying for the point she seemed bound to evade. "Whether you are the same or not, I shall soon find out. There's such a lot I want to talk to you about."

Nomé winced, and made another attempt to deflect him. "Yes, we have much to talk over, haven't we? We shall have to get acquainted all over again, really. I have changed much more than I may show on the surface. There will be plenty of time to find all that out."

He did not see her warning. His frankness had been chafing under the strain her coolness put upon him, and now he broke through the ice.

"Nomé! we *must* be friends!" he exclaimed. "Surely we can be friends again, better friends than we ever were before. I have so much to explain—there were good reasons for what I did! I can't bear to have you here, at last, and not have you know why I acted so——"

She raised her hand to stop him. "You may be a good Minister of Police, Lord Felvex," she said calmly, "but you never had too much tact—so I beg of you to spare me. I know what you are going to say."

"You can't know!" he insisted. "I was in duty bound——"

"And now?" she inquired, raising her brows.

"It is different now. We can begin again, and I shall at least not act under false pretenses."

Nomé winced at the phrase. "You are dangerously near a forbidden topic, Lord Felvex," she said.

"I want to be honest with you, that's all. I know the result well enough. You are my guest, and you cannot leave, but isn't it better to be honest than to pretend?"

"Perhaps it is; I don't know. Sometimes we haven't the power of choice."

"I have found you again so wonderfully, Nomé! I could bear to have you think the worst of me while you were out of my world. There was nothing else to do. But now, when we meet face to face, here, now—it all comes back so swiftly and keenly—you are you, and I am I, and we must go together——"

Nomé flung herself out of her chair and faced him. She had done her best to stay him, but now it was too late to avoid the issue. "Must I go over it all again?" she cried, stretching out her arms to him. "Must you make me suffer again what I have suffered and conquered? My God! How I have fought you in spirit—how I have slain you in my breast—and here you appear as a ghost to haunt me! And I killed myself, at the same time with you—or thought I did. No, no, no, it is too late! You shall not harass me! See—I am quivering, but it is not for you! It is too late!"

"Is there another, Nomé?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes — another — higher, nobler, greater love than you could ever inspire!"

"Then it is too late indeed!"

"Why did it have to be *you*? Why was I brought to this house? Why, of all places! Why do you torment me—you who should protect me, as your guest?"

"I am sorry," he answered. "But I could not think of you as changing, for I have not changed. I thought that we might at least be friends, and in all honor!"

"It is too late—I cannot!" Her face was one capable of expressing tragedy, and now it was drawn and intense with emotion. But it had not lost its dark, passionate beauty.

"Listen, Lord Felvex," she said, and her breath came fast with her excitement. "You have opened the door and let doubt into my soul. Now I am again on trial—how shall I prove myself? I have clung to that old love of you through two long years of pain, holding it to my breast as the one greatest thing of my life. All I sacri-

ficed for it had made it more dear to me. Then, my doubts of you at last killed it. Surely it died! Then came another, a greater emotion even than that. I could not have embraced it had not that old love died. But I did embrace it; it has grown, it has filled my life. It has given me peace, if not happiness. And now—comes doubt. If I believe you, must I return to that old love to prove myself true? Or must I hold to this other, to prove myself true? Whatever happens, shall I not prove myself incapable of any real, lasting emotion? So far, I have believed in myself. I was true to you until you died, and I have been true to this new feeling as well. Now I must be false to one or the other; which shall I choose? Oh, I want not to believe you—that would be the easier way! I cannot serve both, and I cannot abandon both. I will not believe you! You have taken advantage of your position, and of my position here. If I could only leave this house!"

"Nomé," he said, "what can I do? Let it be all over between us, if that will help you. I shall not speak of it again."

"Oh, it's too late now!" she moaned.

"Let us, at least, or at most, be friends, then."

"That can't be, mustn't be. I have no right even to your friendship."

"I don't see why not," he persisted.

"It is too dangerous."

She knew well enough how he would interpret this, but she was past caring now. She made a savage attempt to keep back her tears. Lord Felvex had walked away and stood by the window. There was a silence of some moments before he returned to her.

"I can't unsay what I said, Nomé," he began, "but I am sorry."

"Spare me your pity," she said bitterly.

"I am sorry for myself. You should be happy. It is ended now, forever. I have made the terrible mistake of being honest—the mistake men usually

make. But that should not hurt you permanently. You have something better than I could offer you. Take it freely. Don't be afraid to be happy. Don't be a slave to your past emotions."

"If I could only leave! I will leave as soon as possible!" she exclaimed.

"You cannot leave yet. Let Lady Felvex be your friend, instead of me."

"I am a hypocrite in her house. I can't bear that."

"You need no excuses. You saved my life. That is enough."

"Let me think. I had thought that I had finished with thinking, but I must begin again. So I thought I had finished with feeling, and I felt again. Never mind. Some time, Lord Felvex, you may know what I have suffered. Should that time come, you may forgive me."

He turned the talk to impersonal matters and, after awhile, her strain was relieved. Despite his honest blundering he had a delicacy of perception that reassured her; it was one of the old, familiar graces of manner that made her heart beat faster. When he left, she smiled a farewell.

The dull ache to which she had become accustomed, however, had now increased to an active pain. Had it not been for the Cause, she would willingly have cast off her pride and shown him how much she cared. She knew she was still capable of that, and would glory in it; but her life was not hers to live now. Not only must she know no hopes, but no despairs.

Her one desire was that the word should come quickly, and that she might settle everything by one swift stroke. She would give it mechanically, and it would bring her peace.

That night she went down to dinner for the first time. As she passed through the hall on the arm of Lord Felvex a parlormaid passed her and opened the doors of the dining-room for them. There was something familiar in her movements which troubled Nomé for a moment. When she took her seat the maid had entered,

and stood at the butler's table. The next moment she turned and, in the cap and apron of the servant, Nomé recognized Irma Strieb. It was all she could do to conceal her surprise, and her mind ran immediately to account for the girl's presence. First, the terrible thought came to her that Irma had been sent to complete the work which she, Nomé, had failed in, and was there awaiting an immediate chance to kill the minister. Next, Nomé feared that she herself was distrusted and watched. That Irma had some definite mission was not to be doubted. Hard as it was to battle with these emotions, Nomé composed herself and awaited developments. She could scarcely trust herself to speak, and at first answered at random, overpoweringly conscious of Irma's presence. Her instinctive dislike of the girl was intensified by the espionage which she herself, as well as the minister, was under, making her feel more in league with him than with Irma.

The talk ran on, and Nomé took advantage of her illness to hazard but few remarks, watching the spy surreptitiously. Not a sign of recognition escaped Irma Strieb's eyes, however, and the drama played itself out.

Just before the dinner was over it occurred to Nomé, in a flash of intuition, that it was her duty to give Irma some chance of communication. Possibly she was, after all, only a messenger and had something important to communicate from Mangus. The suggestion relieved her mind enormously, and from that moment her wits rallied. At a chance when Irma was on her side of the table, Nomé caught her eye and dropped her serviette. Irma stooped to pick it up and, rising, found time to place a folded slip of paper in Nomé's hand. Nomé concealed it in the folds of her gown. Her spirits rose, for this byplay had reinstated her as one with a definite mission, a weapon of the Cause. She began to act again; all her finesse and art were brought out in a brilliant flow of conversation. She played her part as well for Irma Strieb

as for Lord and Lady Felvex, compelling, as usual, the admiration of her listeners.

As soon as she could be alone in her room she tore open the note. She had not allowed herself to speculate upon its contents before, for she had expended all her emotional energy upon the endeavor to seem self-possessed. But now her heart beat fast with a sudden fear lest the summons had come and she must strike immediately. She had been lulled into a sense of security—a feeling that, in spite of her inaction, she was still furthering the work of the Cause. Now she was brought up again suddenly with the prospect of an immediate call to arms, and she had an instinctive sense of relief when she read the following words:

Do not act until you have seen Madame Spiritan.

VI

Nomé improved rapidly in strength. When she was well enough to take the air she drove out in Lady Felvex's carriage. The two ladies were at times accompanied by Lord Felvex, and Nomé began to perceive, for the first time, evidences of the wide repute she had gained. Their landau was repeatedly stopped that the minister might receive the greetings of congratulatory friends; and everyone presented to Nomé had a look of piquant interest and an expression of approbation more or less flattering for the girl. She could not help noticing that the carriage was often pointed out by the strollers in the Park, and the curiosity displayed left her no doubt that she had become, in her way, a person of note. This public interest was as hard to bear as the private evidences of gratitude which her hostess showered upon her; for it brought into sharp relief the reverse of the medal—the picture of herself as an assassin pursued by the public opprobrium.

She was becoming accustomed and apathetic to her false position, however, biding the suspense, when one

day she was stung to the quick by the sight of O'Brien. He was sitting on a bench by the drive, and, as the carriage swept by, their eyes met. He stared at her without apparent recognition. A wave of color surged to Nomé's cheeks, for, on the instant, she realized what the sight of her, comfortably ensconced in the cushions of Lord Felvex's carriage, would mean to such an excitable member of the Circle.

It did not matter what the crowd thought of her. It did not so much matter even what Lord Felvex himself thought of her, for these outsiders would never understand her motives, and could never credit her with the glory of a sublime ideal. But to be misjudged and suspected by one of her own comrades in the Cause was galling to her pride. And she knew that O'Brien would suspect her. His fierce class-hatred and hot, radical prejudices would resent the sight of Nomé playing the part of an aristocrat. He would suspect her of being seduced by the life she was now leading; he would doubt of her being able to end it with the necessary tragic climax. She had been used before to wealth and social honors. He would scarcely trust her, surrounded by such temptations, not to return to her old place in the world, the place to which she was born. The vision of his face followed her, accusing and malevolent, during the rest of the day.

With the freedom of the house as her privilege, she had made familiar use of the library, which was well and wisely stocked. It was little used, and there Nomé often found sanctuary from the distracting moods of her suspense. There were two rooms completely filled with books, the smaller chamber being shut off from the larger by a curtained doorway.

She went downstairs one afternoon, intending to return a volume which she had borrowed, and was just about to pass between the portières when, pushing aside the folds, she saw that the small room was occupied. Lord Felvex was there with a lady whom Nomé

had never seen before, and the two were in the midst of an animated conversation.

Nomé took her in, estimated and appraised her at the first glance. She was a scintillating blonde with a high-rolling pompadour, eyes of Irish blue, deeply cleft cheeks and dazzling teeth set in a large open mouth. She was a finished product of fashionable society. All that was possible for coiffeur, masseuse and manicure, for tailor, milliner and jeweler, to do had been done. Every natural excellence had been so accentuated, and every defect so improved or concealed, that, without any pretensions to good looks, she gave an effect of definite beauty. Her costume was a miracle of violet chiffon; her hat was the extreme of picturesque millinery. She was smoking a cigarette whose perfume, mingled with the odor of violets, came to Nomé to accentuate the impression this exotic *mondaine* produced upon the young girl's mind. No strange and terrible orchid could have attracted her with stronger feelings of surprise and alarm. Nomé dropped the curtain hurriedly, yet stood fascinated by the scraps of talk which came to her.

"But you really *are* good-looking, George," the lady was saying. "Most Englishmen's faces are made of either wax or rubber, but yours is marble. You've got a lovely, firm chin, with that delicious little cleft that looks as if God had put His thumb there the last thing and said, '*There! now you're finished!*' And you've got psychic hands, too—that's why I'm so afraid of you! Look at mine—I wish I could whittle off my fingers till they were pointed like yours! Oh, you're a charmer, George, you needn't pretend not to be. But oh, George, I wish I could get that '*gelebt und geliebt*' look round the eyes! However did you do it? It must have taken two or three wonderful women to put *that* on, now!"

Lord Felvex's frank laughter rang through the little room. "It's no use, Belle," he said. "This won't work. What's the little game, anyway?"

"Shame!" she replied airily. "I

don't flatter myself. Oh, you're impregnable, I know that well enough. I'm not pursuing you. But I have the fatal art of understanding you, that's all. I can feel vibrations—I'm sensitive. You have power—I have only sympathy. And I'm emancipated enough to admire you frankly. I wish I could help you. You're so different to most men. Poor Henri was so much of a type that I felt as if I were marrying a thousand men at a whack when I got him."

"Do you know, Belle," Lord Felvex said, "sometimes I suspect you of being clever?"

"Oh, spare me!" she cried mockingly. "That only means that I'm not good to look at! I'd give a brain for a good pair of eyes, any time. Just because you have both, you shouldn't take advantage!"

Nomé waited to hear no more, and, her mind whirling with this revelation of Lord Felvex's character, she made her way to her room.

A week passed, bringing no further word from Mangus. Nomé caught occasional glimpses of Irma Strieb, and these convinced her that sinister preparations were being made, without giving any clue as to the new part that she herself was to play. She longed to have the suspense over and to know just what was expected of her.

One day Lady Felvex came to her room and made the first positive request.

"I hope," she said, "you will be willing to dine with us tonight, Miss Destin, for we are expecting several persons whom I would like to have you meet. The Russian military *attaché* will be here, and a Colonel Grennyngs—he was a field comrade of Lord Felvex during the war. Then there is a charming Irishwoman who is most anxious to meet you. She is Madame Spiritan; we all consider her very clever and amusing."

Nomé was alertly attentive in an instant. "I shall be charmed; do tell me about the lady," she said.

"Really, I have known her a very

short time, after all," said Lady Felvex. "She was sent to us with the best possible credentials by a friend of my husband in the French War Office. She is very attractive, and is a great favorite here—especially among the men. I might say, in fact, that she is essentially a man's woman."

"Her husband comes with her?" Nomé inquired.

"She is a widow," was the reply. "One can tell that as soon as she enters the room. She is rather good-looking and highly accomplished—most decidedly finished."

Something in Lady Felvex's tone made Nomé look at her curiously. The glance was caught and returned. Lady Felvex took the girl's hand.

"I hope you will not think me unfair," she said frankly, "but I must tell you that I don't like Madame Spiritan, myself. I distrust her instinctively, and yet I have no real reason for my feeling, and know nothing whatever to her discredit. It is partly on this account that I wish to be especially nice to her, and so I have asked you to help me. I don't wish to be prejudiced by my feelings in any way, and to avoid that I'm exerting myself to make her welcome in my house."

When Lady Felvex left Nomé gave herself over to speculation. She was to meet Madame Spiritan that evening, and would undoubtedly receive, at last, definite orders. There seemed to be no end to the complications of her position. A guest of Lady Felvex, wearing her hostess's own gowns, eating her bread and salt, she must hold herself ready to ally herself with, and to obey, one who was confessedly *persona non grata* in the household.

At seven o'clock she went down to the reception-room in some trepidation. Colonel Grennyngs had already arrived and was presented to her through a monocle. He was the typical Briton of the stage, complete even to the long drooping mustache and blond hair, a V.C. who would bridle and shy like a nervous colt if the subject of his decoration were brought up.

He greeted Nomé with a comical deference, paid exaggerated attention to everything she said, and, with exquisite tactlessness, broached the subject of her adventure with the footpads.

The Russian *attaché* entered just in time to save her from embarrassment. He was a smiling, dark, easy-mannered man, with a brown pointed beard, half bald, with twinkling eyes. His airs and graces cast a gloom over the inarticulate colonel who, routed by this competition, turned to Lady Felvex for appreciation.

The Russian was, in his turn, eclipsed by the arrival of Madame Spiritan, who, sailing in on a wave of laughter, filled the room with her vivacious presence. It was as if some whimsical songbird had fluttered indoors. Nomé's eyes sprang to meet the newcomer in excited anticipation. Then she stared as if in the presence of a ghost.

Madame Spiritan was no other than the woman she had seen in such questionable relations with Lord Felvex in the library only a few days previously. Nomé was astounded and indignant at the apparition—she had expected so different a messenger from Mangus. She had looked forward to the meeting, eager to welcome this new envoy of the Cause, a sister pledged, like her, to the noble perils of their crusade. Instead, she had to meet and greet a fashionable chatterbox, a society doll, not above the odium of a common, surreptitious flirtation. Nomé had little time to adjust herself, however, for Madame Spiritan was as voluble as ether, and her conversation, permeating the apartment, had the effect either of stupefying competition or of exhilarating repartee. She began to babble:

"Well, I am late, as usual; I don't know *what* is going to become of me—isn't it terrible? . . . How are you, my dear Lady Felvex? I haven't seen you in an age—when in the world was it?—and how d'y do, Colonel Grennyngs! I declare it is good to see you—and Count Pribdoff—how do you do?—I must have another game

of bezique with you—now, don't you forget!—and oh, I saw you flirting desperately with Hetty Clancy at the Dorés' cotillion—don't you *dare* to deny it!—I never thought of you as a conservatory man, but I'll have my revenge—you'll see! All's fair in love and Welsh rabbits. Lord Felvex, I *am* charmed—you don't look a day over ninety tonight! Think of finding two men in one room with crosses! Two V.C.'s ought to amount to royalty. It does seem like a waste of bravery and courage and gallantry under fire and conduct becoming an officer and a gentleman, and all that sort of thing, doesn't it? It's a pity we can't coax a lion into the room just to see what you two highly decorated men would do. I'll wager you'd pull up your trousers and jump on the table like ordinary women!"

Colonel Grennyngs burst into a roar of laughter and drawled: "By Jove, Madame Spiritan, it would jolly well take a regiment of elephants before *you'd* funk, I give you *my* word!"

"Now do present me to Miss Destin," Madame Spiritan went on airily. "I'm simply expiring to meet her. Oh, I'm so pleased! I've heard about you and thought about you, Miss Destin, until I was actually black in the face! Do tell me, what does it feel like to be a celebrity and have your picture in the papers and resolutions drawn up and streets named after you, and all sorts of nice things? I haven't been an infant prodigy since I had the mumps—but seriously, I do think you are awfully clever and brave and noble and everything, and I do admire your pluck so much! Really, I do, and I want to know you and tell you how foolish it was to save such an old reprobate as Lord Felvex, and find out where in America you have to go to get a complexion like that! I couldn't manufacture one as good if I had twenty-seven beauty doctors working on me for six weeks—and if you'll only exchange your hair for mine, I'll give you a dozen pairs of gloves to boot, and every one of them will make two for you. I'm simply dying to be a

brunette; blondes never do anything but get fat and marry or go on the stage—and yellow hair spells wall-flower in every ballroom in Europe. You mustn't mind me if I run on like this, my dear; I'm only getting my breath. I'm trying to prevent Count Pribdoff's monopolizing you. He always has the prettiest woman in the room in chains before the evening's out, and wherever he goes he leaves a streak of fire. . . . Why, Lady Felvex! are you really waiting for me? Do let's go in, then; I'm half starved—and when I'm hungry I always look like a fright. Give me your arm, count. This going in to dinner always reminds me of a wedding procession with the butler standing at the serving-table like a fat bishop, and the waiter giving away the potatoes, and the terrified guests mumbling 'with this fork I thee eat'!"

So, humming a snatch of "Lohengrin," she gallivanted gaily into the dining-room.

Nomé's mind was whirling with the effects of this gambado. Could it be possible that such a scatterbrain had anything to do with the Cause? She was shocked at the appearance of levity in such a connection, and could not imagine herself taking orders from such a madcap, addle-pated creature.

Yet the note from Mangus gave her no other choice than to await Madame Spiritan's instructions. Had Nomé possessed a larger sense of humor the occasion, tragic as were its possibilities, might have afforded her considerable secret mirth. As it was, she felt like a serpent depending for aid upon a butterfly. As she sat upon her host's right hand, she watched Madame Spiritan's frivolous machinations with Count Pribdoff, who appeared to be well within her sphere of influence. Lady Felvex engaged the attention of Colonel Grennyngs, leaving her husband to converse with Nomé. The talk ran on for awhile in these three channels.

The butterfly soon began to range further afield, and caught the attention of the two other men. She put

one elbow on the table and pointed a spoon at Colonel Grennyngs.

"Tell me, colonel," she said, "has the Victoria Cross ever been given to a woman?"

He turned to Nomé, and looking at her pointedly, said: "I don't see Miss Destin wearing any."

Nomé blushed, and Lord Felvex generously went to her assistance.

"There wouldn't be bronze enough in the world to make crosses of if we began to decorate the women who deserve them; and most women would have so many clasps that they couldn't carry them."

"Every factory girl in the land would be eligible," Nomé added.

"My dear Miss Destin," Madame Spiritan exclaimed, "I hardly think it will do for factory girls to be discussed, until the men are left alone with their coffee."

Nomé's cheeks were blazing again, and this time Lady Felvex interposed.

"The woman who can prevent men from finishing their coffee within three-quarters of an hour deserves a cross more than anyone, I think. I have no doubt that either Colonel Grennyngs or my husband would give theirs up to you, Madame Spiritan."

"Indeed, I shall not tempt them, thank you. They can have as long as they wish to smoke. I intend to have a tête-à-tête with Miss Destin after dinner and talk about New York. She must know loads of my friends there."

For the first time she shot a direct glance at Nomé, one with a semblance of hidden meaning behind it. Then she gushed on again:

"I was a factory girl once; that's why I'm so sensitive about them. I'd never dare to acknowledge it if I weren't Irish. Being an Irishwoman is almost as good as being an American girl—and that's the next best thing to coming from Mars direct."

The rest of the dinner conversation passed almost unheeded by Nomé. Her mind was whirling, fearful of what was to come afterward. Something, she knew, was to be revealed

as soon as she and Madame Spiritan could be alone. It was so different from what she had expected that it took all her energy to say to herself; "I am not really a guest here in this house, but a spy, an assassin ready at a moment's notice from this woman to shoot down my host in cold blood." Try as she might she could not adjust herself to this role; her ally's frivolous talk disconcerted her; she answered mechanically the questions that were put to her. Had she not possessed a natural fluency she would have betrayed her state of mind.

The lights of the candles, the reflections on silver and cut-glass danced before her eyes; she was as if in a dream, and in the dream she heard voluble phrases and well-turned sentences coming from her own lips, while she resurrected old ready-made opinions and criticisms of Bernard Shaw, Nietzsche and Grieg, the season's drama, the political situation in America, equal suffrage for women, British colonization, the rise of the Russian national spirit—on all of which topics she had thought well.

On her right Colonel Grennyngs, under the spell of her unconscious charm, plied her with persistent compliments; while, on the other side, she was distracted by the sight of Lord Felvex's handsome face. His deference and sympathy tortured her with memories of what he had been to her. From time to time sallies of laughter from the count, fascinated by the more flamboyant attractions of Madame Spiritan, greeted that lady's persiflage. Lady Felvex's quiet, gentle bearing was the only relief to Nomé's distracted mood. Here, she felt instinctively, she could find a friend, and would always find one, whatever happened. Lady Felvex's sure, intuitive sense of justice was bound to the girl's soul, for, whatever the issue, she was sure that here was one who would never judge her quickly or harshly.

The ladies at last withdrew, and passed into the drawing-room. Lady Felvex, hospitably mindful of Madame Spiritan's desire to talk with Nomé,

left the two alone and, making a simple pretext, went upstairs. Madame Spiritan continued her drolleries until the door was closed. Then her manner suddenly changed.

She took Nomé's arm and drew her to a seat upon the divan. From beneath the *berthe* of sequins that ornamented the breast of her own gown she hurriedly drew a velvet bag.

"Here," she said, "you must take this, first of all. Quick, now! It is a revolver. Be careful, it's loaded. I'll show you where to hide it." And turning up the fichu of lace about Nomé's neck she fastened the bag in place with pins, then draped the cascades over the spot and rearranged the corsage bouquet of roses so that everything was hidden.

"As soon as you are in your room," she said, "put it in some safe place, where you can get it at an instant's notice. There!" Her eye had flown from Nomé's breast to the door, back and forth, as she worked; but, when the weapon was well hidden, she fell back against the cushions. Nomé's troubled eyes followed her. Her lips were parted and her heart beat fast with the imminence of the peril betokened by these preparations.

"Must I do it tonight?" she whispered.

"I can't tell yet," was the answer. "I think not. Yet there is no telling how soon we may receive word from Berne. I may receive a telegram at any moment. You must hold yourself prepared to act at an instant's notice from Mangus or from me. It may be postponed for a month, or it may come in ten minutes. Listen; this will be your signal—'*It is only one of many.*' When you get that sentence, either in writing from Mangus or from my lips"—she had dropped her voice to a whisper—"you are to shoot Lord Felvex, and you are to shoot to kill. Do you understand?"

Nomé's head fell on her hand. "I understand," she murmured.

Scarcely had she spoken when the door opened and a maid entered bearing coffee, liqueurs and cigarettes.

Nomé saw at a glance that it was Irma Strieb, and looked to Madame Spiritan for her cue. To her surprise the lady's air instantly changed, and her torrent of nonsense broke loose again.

"Now, *really*, my dear Miss Destin, you ought to read some of the New Thought. You've no idea what a comfort it is to know that you don't have to do things and break your back and spoil your fingers trying to earn money and get on and be popular, and wheedle old men and flatter old women, but only just lie down on the sofa with a box of chocolates and take off your slippers and relax and devitalize and set your psychic forces in motion, and everything that's good and beautiful and splendid and lovely will come galloping toward you on horseback. You ought to place yourself in a mood to induce receptivity and trust in the All-Good, and just let the vibrations bring about the phenomena. It's perfectly lovely, and saves all your worry and brain fag and nerve force and money and everything. I tell you, people don't half realize what a wonderful help can be gained through not worrying about things and just eating your dinner peaceably and letting the universal what-you-may-call-it radiate through you. Why, when I think of all the martyrs that have burned at the stake, and had their teeth pulled out and their toes cut off—ugh! isn't it horrid?—just because they didn't know enough to enter into the harmony and oneness of things and rely upon the objectivity of thought and spiritual influence, it does seem a shame, doesn't it? But I'm sure we are growing to a higher and a nobler conception of existence and life forces and truth and things. Lady Felvex says that the New Thought is nothing but a cheap, sloppy optimism, and why don't we go to Emerson or Plato and get it in solid junks without capitals and italics and milk and water. But I must say these little magazines and blue-covered books with funny title-pages do chew it up for you so fine and thin that a mere child ought to be able to put transcendental forces in

motion and bring about introactive relations with the All-in-All, and it has done me loads of good. I'm happy and contented and at peace with the great principles of life, and I don't worry about the Submerged Tenth, or tuberculosis, or anything like that, and I think that's a great gain, don't you?"

As she warbled on, she helped herself daintily to the coffee, poured a glass of *bénédictine* and took a cigarette. Irma Strieb was stolidly oblivious of all save her duties, and as soon as the two ladies had been served, left the room without a word or look of recognition.

"Don't you know who she is?" Nomé whispered in perplexity.

"I know her, but she doesn't know me, by any means. You and Mangus are the only persons in England who know my secret, and you would never have been told if it hadn't been for the extraordinary complications of the situation."

She dropped her voice to a lower pitch: "My dear, Mangus has asked me to do what I can to induce you to transfer your services to the International Committee. We need information that can be obtained only by women who are willing to live as I do. There's no use mincing matters—I'm a spy. I report directly to Berne, but I act in co-operation with Mangus at the head of the English section. You could help us enormously with your charm and your education and the immense advantage you have acquired in having saved Lord Felvex. We need women like you, and if you are willing to join that branch of the work there is much for you to do, though there is little enough glory in it. This assassination, as the English section planned it, is a mere detail, and we can easily find someone else to carry it out. The whole situation has developed so startlingly in the last month that we are sitting tight, awaiting advices from Switzerland. You are given the choice, however, of joining the secret service with me, or of carrying out your original errand. But you must choose immediately between the two. Your

action, whatever it is, must be voluntary."

Nomé answered firmly: "Madame Spiritan, it is too late now to recede or to change. I have no choice but to go on as I began. I would always be suspected by the Circle of treachery if I kept the place I seem to hold now. Besides all this, there are other reasons that impel me to keep to my original intention. The whole success or failure of my life depends upon it. I've had enough of theories and abstractions and equivocal positions; I must *act* for once, and put my convictions to the test. I don't care to live, but I do want to end my life with some one big thing having been accomplished. The suspense and the hypocrisy of the situation are unbearable, and I can scarcely wait to end it all."

"You are a brave girl," said Madame Spiritan; "you are magnificent! I confess I couldn't do it. I can pull the wool over the eyes of these fools, hood-wink men, deceive women, eavesdrop and play the spy—that is my *métier*. But I could no more pull the trigger of that revolver than I could come into this drawing-room in a last year's frock. It is settled, then. I'm sorry for you, my dear girl, but you to your work and I to mine; we are both laboring for the Cause."

Nomé looked up at her in frank admiration. "Oh, I had no idea you were like this!" she whispered. "How I misjudged you! How little I know of life, of human nature—almost as little, Madame Spiritan, as I know of myself. How much I long to know!—and how little, little time I have in which to learn!"

Madame Spiritan took both Nomé's hands in hers, and the tears were in her eyes. "You are very young, dear," she answered. "Indeed, you have much to learn. I am a woman—do you think I enjoy my hypocrisy? Do you think I can go about, two-faced, double-tongued, laughed at or despised as a scatterbrain, a doll, a flirt, without feeling my degradation? And I know, too, how much worse than that I am! The lowest sneak-thief is better, if I

allow myself to think by the world's standards. But, Nomé, we have given up the world's standards for something higher. We have pledged to this Cause not only our lives but our honor. I gave mine willingly, cheerfully, and so must you give yours."

"Oh, how you have helped me!" Nomé exclaimed in her relief at finding, at last, a worthy comrade to support her in this agony of her spirit. She smiled through her tears. "I think I can bear it now," she said simply. "And yet—there is one thing, Madame Spiritan, that you do not know—that you could never guess—you have no idea of my weakness—I could not confess it to a man—but—Lord Felvex——"

Madame Spiritan bent over and kissed her upon the cheek. "I know," she said. "It was partly for that that I offered you the chance to act with me."

"No! no!" Nomé cried bitterly. "Never that! I must die. I long for death!"

"We shall make all possible preparation for your escape the moment we receive advices," Madame Spiritan continued hurriedly. "But I must warn you that there is little hope of our being able to get you off; less chance than there was before. In plain terms, it is murder—and really, my dear Miss Destin, I think your tall buildings in New York are the most *atrocious* things! That Flatiron building is, for all the world, like a huge slice of cheese, filled with maggots; and as for your Elevated trains, one might as well climb into the inside of an anaconda and be done with it!"

Her quick ear had detected the rustling of Lady Felvex's silk skirts outside the door, and before it swung open Madame Spiritan's bubbling pleasantries were filling the room. Nomé, despite her agitation, could not fail to admire the marvelous agility of her fellow-conspirator's wits. She herself found some trouble in managing the change of mood, and, to conceal her nervousness, rose to greet her hostess.

"Madame Spiritan has been most amusing," she said, "but we have missed you, Lady Felvex."

Almost immediately the drawing-room doors were thrown open and the men entered. The conversation became general, and Nomé, stimulated by the excitement, began to talk. She soon held the circle of guests in delight with her conversation. Colonel Grennyngs's eyes did not leave her. The count forgot, for the while, the giddier attractions of Madame Spiritan. The minister drew the girl out with skilful questions. Lady Felvex watched her curiously, much interested in the effect she was producing upon the men.

The color was sustained in Nomé's cheeks. Her eyes were dark with emotion, her gestures were animated by the insistence of her soul to prepare a defense for herself against the time of accusation. She turned the talk toward the higher ethical subjects and the martyrs of all great causes, defending even those who, half crazed by brooding over great wrongs, had made their tremendous but sublime mistakes with the high-mindedness of patriots. Madame Spiritan, as Nomé approached these radical theories, mingled a running stream of whimsical comment; but the interest of the men was held, despite their objections, in admiration of the girl's eloquence, and Nomé's object was attained. Whatever should happen now, she could never be accused of a common, vulgar treachery. She had said enough to make them pause in their judgment of her when her hour had struck. It was characteristic of her vanity that she should take the pains thus to pave the way for her apologists. She could not bear to be anything less than wonderful, anything less than a heroine.

The talk finally ebbed until a game of bridge was proposed. Madame Spiritan eagerly accepted the opportunity to break up the gravity of the evening. A party was arranged, consisting of herself and the three men, Lady Felvex protesting her desire to look on with Nomé, who could not play.

It was now Madame Spiritan's turn to entertain the company, and, in spite of the etiquette of the game, she kept up a continual fire of raillery. Lady Felvex took her place upon the divan, holding Nomé's hand.

The play had gone on for half an hour when the door opened and Irma Strieb entered, bearing an envelope upon a tray.

"A telegram for Madame Spiritan," she announced, and handed it to that lady.

Nomé freed herself from Lady Felvex's hand. Her own flew to her breast. There it rested, trembling, upon the weapon hidden under the fichu while her eyes stared fixedly at the group seated about the table, awaiting the signal that might come.

"Why in the world do you suppose they pursue me with telegrams so?" Madame Spiritan complained pettishly, tearing open the envelope. "Now I shall forget the run of the game, and you'll have to suffer for it, Count Pribdoff. There's only one possible excuse for a telegram, and that's the death of a rich uncle in New Zealand. Everything else ought to wait until after breakfast and be sterilized before it's brought to the table. Now, what do you think of that? Fancy! this is from my milliner. I get them all the time, and they always say the same thing: 'No answer received from bill sent last week.' Colonel, it's your lead, I believe. Is it diamonds or spades?" She tore the paper into scraps and tucked it carefully into the front of her gown, then took up her cards.

Nomé's hand fell to her side, and she leaned back against the cushions with an unconscious sigh.

VII

WITH this respite, Nomé had time to fall into her old doubts again. Although Madame Spiritan's character and purpose were now clear to her, Nomé's suspicions of Lord Felvex's weakness and flippancy were hideous. His compla-

cent attitude during the little tête-à-tête she had surprised was not to be forgotten nor explained. He had been chivalrous enough to forbear to insist upon his old love—was he then consoling himself with the cheap delights of a new? It seemed so inconsistent with his character that Nomé would have scorned to believe it, were it not that, believing, it made her work, upon the whole, easier. If she could only believe it thoroughly, she would be glad of a wound to her pride that would be so relieving a counter-irritant, a narcotic to her own personal love.

But she could not believe it. Her lover himself destroyed her doubt, while, at the same time, digging still deeper the pitfall of deceit into which she must fall.

His first careful avoidance of her society had become more and more impossible. While she was in immediate expectation of the word to act, she had kept aloof, but the continuance of her stay had brought them necessarily together so often that the two had fallen naturally into a semblance of their old familiarity. Their talk ranged wide, for their sympathy on all matters excepting social science was complete.

They could not long, however, evade the one subject which colored their whole association. As she fell again under the spell of his frankness and breadth of view, she felt more and more desirous of impressing him with her own steadfastness of purpose, and the emotional intensity which had always succeeded with others. Most of all she desired to justify herself, before it was too late.

Lord Felvex gave her this opportunity one morning after breakfast. He had come upon her, unexpectedly, in the library, much as she had come upon him, and there was something in the surprise of the meeting that brought them suddenly closer together than they had been before. It was, in fact, the first time that he had seen her alone since his visit to her.

She let her book fall, and looked up at him with an attempt at calmness,

but her confusion was apparent. He stopped at sight of her, then put down his hat and gloves, and stood for an instant leaning against the open shelves of books. She had begun to tremble before he spoke.

"Nomé," he said, "I can't stand this; what prevents our being friends?"

Her eyes fell. "Oh, it's no use," she murmured.

"What prevents our being friends?" he repeated. "Have I some enemy to whom you are pledged?"

"No, no enemy—at least, none that need matter."

"Have I changed so much that you cannot care for me?"

"Oh, no! Surely not that!"

"Have you?"

"No, not in that way."

"Then we are friends—really."

"Yes, that's what tortures me. I can't explain. Don't ask me to. You have friends enough. Console yourself with them."

"What do you mean?"

"Surely you have friends enough."

"Whom?" He knitted his brows, and then, dropping into a chair beside her, he looked at her steadily. "Do you mean anyone in particular, Nomé?"

"No." But she avoided his glance.

"Is it possible—that you mean—Madame Spiritan, for instance?"

The color rushed to her face as she replied, returning his gaze boldly enough now: "I have perceived your predilection."

"And that, then, is what prevents our friendship?"

"Oh, no!"

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "is it possible that you can imagine there is anything between Madame Spiritan and me?"

"I am sure that there is not. But I am not sure that it is your fault. It does not matter, anyway. You know me well enough to believe me incapable of any such vulgar jealousy."

"Nomé, let me say this: you know the responsibility of my position, in a way, but perhaps you do not know that my office compels me oftentimes

to keep up acquaintances which, personally, I should prefer to be free from. Surely you will be reasonable enough to distinguish between the man and the office."

"Oh, I do! I do! It is because of your official capacity, precisely, that we cannot be friends."

"And for no other reason?"

She let her head fall upon her hand to hide her shamed face from him. Then she said slowly: "Yes, and for another reason. Why will you wring it from me? Don't you know? Can't you see? I have loved you, and I can't forget it! I can't even keep it decently to myself. This first time we are alone it shrieks aloud!"

"But I don't understand—you said that there was another."

"There is, or there was. But I can't forget you! I have no pride, no honor, no constancy left. To think of you for an instant proves me unfaithful and unworthy of the other, but to cling to the other must prove that my first, fresh, dewy morning of love was false and has died. I can't bear it. No matter which way I turn I am false and untrue! I have prided myself on my steadfastness of purpose, my strength of feeling, my abandon, my wholeness of emotion, and now I am weaker than the merest dabbler in sensations."

Lord Felvex took her hand in both his. "Don't say that, Nomé," he pleaded. "Don't make me forget, too! Oh, if only my own happiness and yours were at stake, I would show you the cheapness of that pride of yours! I would show you which way to turn for happiness! I would conquer you and save you and preserve you."

"And if I were only concerned with my happiness," she replied, looking at him through her tears, "I would take you! Oh, I can speak the truth at times! I would cast everything aside, and hold to you, whether you would have me or not. I would stake all on that first awakening into life, and believe it the best and truest. But I cannot, George, I cannot! Nor, if I could, would there ever again be peace in my

heart! '*Mein' Ruh ist hin!*' I must leave you."

"Yes," he assented. "It is the only way."

"I will leave as soon as possible. But we must spare Lady Felvex—I will not be abrupt."

"On the contrary," he replied, "Lady Felvex must know everything!"

"Can you tell her?"

"She is my best friend. You do not know her!"

Nomé leaned to him impulsively, and kissed him, then sprang up. "I had forgotten how fine you were!" she said.

"I had forgotten nothing about you," he said, smiling.

"And perhaps, now, we can be friends. I am not afraid any more. Perhaps sometime you will understand. I thought I was strong enough to bear it, but I broke down. Yet, somehow, I feel the stronger for it."

It was not till the exhilaration of his presence had left her, and she had gone to her room, that she began to awaken to her responsibility, and the hideous mistake she had made in permitting this crisis to arrive. She had again fallen a prey to her emotions and her vanity. She had been lured on again by the desire to right herself in his eyes, and had come near to ruining the projects of the Cause by precipitating a rupture with the household. How could she explain this to Mangus, who depended upon her maintaining friendly relations with Lord Felvex? There was only one chance for her—that her orders should come before she had to leave the house. She had had her scene, and now she must risk the consequences.

It was with a tortured mind that she repented her indulgence. As before, she had thought, felt and spoken; even in this scene she had not acted. But, as before, she made a brave attempt to cajole her conscience with promises. When the time came—then she would prove herself!

From the day when her duty was postponed Nomé had kept a journal,

and every day she had written pages of confidential confession, intending that it should vindicate her to the world after her act was consummated. She spent much energy upon this task, often writing far into the night. It was expressed in as guarded terms as she could invent; nevertheless, her conscience reproved her for the indiscretion, for the book, if discovered before her deed was enacted, might have destroyed the plans of the Movement. She could not deny herself the satisfaction of writing, however, and condoned the offense with feminine casuistry. She was engaged upon this business one day when, after a knock upon the door, Irma Strieb entered.

Nomé looked up in surprise, for up to this time the two women had never been alone. Now Irma's face expressed fellowship for the first time.

"Ospovat is downstairs and wishes to see you," she said.

"Ospovat?" Nomé repeated. "Here?"

"Yes," Irma replied. She came nearer, with the excuse of arranging the flowers upon the table. "I don't like it," she whispered. "He should stay away. Mangus would be furious if he knew, but Ospovat always was a little fool—especially over you."

"I must see him," said Nomé.

"Of course, I knew you would," Irma retorted.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you have lost your heart—that you are weakening—and I expected it!"

Nomé rose and pointed toward the door. "You must go!" she said. "I don't dare to argue with you here—it is too dangerous—but you are mistaken, or you're false. You know well enough that I'm obeying orders as much as you, and that I must wait."

"I know well enough that you are always the fine lady, and I do the dirty work! And I know more, that you like it as much as I dislike it. And I suspect still more, too. I am glad of one thing, though, that I am here to watch you. I've seen and heard al-

most enough already." Irma's face was sullen as she turned to go.

"For heaven's sake, be careful how you talk!" Nomé entreated. "It won't do for you to be seen here with me, and least of all with any such evidence of a quarrel. You must believe in me, Irma. I am suffering too much already from my position to have to bear the taunts of my own comrades."

"Am I your comrade, or is Lord Felvex—the man you were chosen to kill?" Irma demanded.

Scarcely had she said the words when there was a knock at the door. Irma opened it. Lady Felvex entered, but upon seeing the two women, each with heightened color, she hesitated at the threshold. "I beg your pardon," she began.

"Irma came up to announce a caller," Nomé explained.

"Irma has no business here," said Lady Felvex. Then, turning to the girl, she added: "Where is Woodley? Why didn't he bring up Miss Destin's caller's card?"

"Woodley was busy—at least, I told him I was coming upstairs, and offered to announce Miss Destin's friend. You see, Woodley wouldn't let the gentleman in at first."

"This is most extraordinary!" said Lady Felvex. "I can't imagine, Miss Destin, why my footman has taken it upon himself to comment upon your callers, nor why he shouldn't have come up to you. I shall most certainly look into the matter."

"Woodley was busy, my lady," Irma repeated, and in speaking betrayed enough emotion for Lady Felvex to give her a swift look.

"Irma has not been annoying you in any way, Nomé?" she hazarded.

"Oh, by no means!" Nomé hastened to protest. Irma's face had grown dark.

"If I thought it were possible, I should discharge her immediately," Lady Felvex remarked. Then, turning to the maid, she said seriously: "Irma, you must not forget that Miss Destin is the most honored guest I could possibly entertain. You have

no right in this room, and it is perfectly evident to me that your coming here is the result of some pretext. Your face shows that something has been said that should not have been said, though Miss Destin is too kind to admit it."

"My dear Lady Felvex, believe me, Irma has said nothing discourteous or unnecessary. I beg you to say no more about it."

Lady Felvex left the room with Irma, and Nomé trembled to think of the difficulties that might ensue from this contretemps. Irma's brooding, lowering looks betokened trouble. It was unfortunate that Lady Felvex had so keenly read the situation.

She went down to see Ospovat, ill at ease, but anticipating his sympathy and trust. She was almost ashamed to think how much she needed his blind confidence, how his words would cheer and cool her.

He was awaiting her, embarrassed and awkward, in the luxuriance of the Felvex reception-room. Other guests had always filled it, and it had framed them with a harmonious background, but the little Russian Jew seemed lost in its elegance, more pathetically ridiculous than ever. He sat on the edge of a gilded chair, twirling his hat in his hands, gnawing his lip, eagerly watching the door.

His joy at seeing her was touching. His tears fell upon her hand like rain as he saluted her. He was no less frightened than embarrassed, also, in the evident fear that his visit might compromise her. As soon as he could control himself so as to talk freely, his intense emotion broke forth in hurried words.

"Ah, how good it is to see you again, Nomé, and to look into your soul through your beautiful eyes! If only the others could see you! I have counted the days—I have watched for you in the Park—I have read the papers that told how you were getting well! I love you more than ever, Nomé, dear Nomé—don't ask me not to tell you so, for I must! How I have suffered with you—if I could only

suffer for you! But that, too, shall be, some time!"

"You believe in me, after all?"

Nomé said, hanging upon his words.

"Ah, yes; how can I not trust you, my wonderful Nomé! I trust you always, in spite of anything they may say, and I defend you always!"

"They doubt me, then, at the Circle?" Nomé ventured, sick at heart.

"You must not blame them—they are all wild and mad! I do not know what is the matter with them; but those articles in the papers have stirred them up. They have seen you riding out with the minister and his wife. I know you could not help it, but it has made much trouble. I have defended you always. I told them that you fired at the minister and hit the robber by mistake—I don't care if you did or not—what you did was right, but I could not bear to hear you so spoken of, you who are so wonderful a heroine, who are worth more than all the Circle put together!"

"What do they say?" Nomé demanded.

"Do not make me tell you," Ospovat pleaded, the tears coming into his eyes.

"You must tell me," Nomé insisted. "Tell me all!"

Ospovat's face grew white, and he almost whimpered. "They say you are a traitor—they say you have forgotten all about the Cause, now, with your rich friends—but I know it is not true, Nomé! Tell me it is not true!"

"Of course it is not true," said Nomé coldly, "but go on—tell me everything!"

"They say that you were once an aristocrat—only because you had a little money at home—and that you will end by being an aristocrat—and will leave us poor men and women to make the fight alone."

"This is O'Brien, of course!"

"Yes, O'Brien curses you day by day. You know how he is."

"Yes, I know. Once he was so fond of me he could not say enough. He said too much for me to believe. It is like him to go to the other extreme. I might have known it."

"But he can't see the big side of it—it is only that, Nomé. Don't hate him, please! Even I don't hate him. I'm sorry, that's all—he'll know better some time. He wants the minister killed only because the minister killed Kinston and Moreley and Spayrock. O'Brien can't forget that—he wants revenge."

"Are there many with him?"

"Yes, many—too many—of the Circle. They are all wrought up. It was the papers and the driving in the Park that did it, and it has stirred them up so that Mangus has hard work to hold them."

"No one believes in me, then?"

"Ah, I believe in you, Nomé, and some of the others, but the women are all jealous. But you will show them! You will do it, and I shall help you! You surely will make another trial, Nomé?"

"I shall do what I can. You know I must wait and be silent. But this terrible suspense must end." Nomé hesitated before she put the next question.

"What does Mangus say?"

"He says nothing but that we must wait—always wait! I can't understand it. Why can't it be done immediately? Do you know?"

"I know something of it, but I can't tell you. This thing is bigger than we thought, and we must obey orders."

"I know. I came to help you. Nomé, if you should lack the courage, if your woman's body should weaken, though your woman's soul never could—won't you let me help you?"

"Ah, you do doubt me, then? I was sure of it."

"No, no, no! Only—O'Brien was for another casting of the lots—I volunteered myself, but Mangus would not have it. There's only one thing I'm afraid of—perhaps Lord Felvex has become too much your friend. Is he your friend?"

"Yes; I have learned to admire him more and more."

"Then how much greater the deed will be! Think of it, Nomé—think what a chance you have! Who will

not stop to listen to us when you, who have saved his life, who have made him your friend, can sacrifice him to the Cause! Never has anyone had such a chance to publish the Cause. They will *have* to hear us then."

Nomé could scarcely speak. She felt for Ospovat's hand in sympathy. "Ospovat! you remember our talk, that night before I went out to act?"

"Yes."

"You remember that I told you that I had loved—someone?"

"Yes." He sat staring at her with his lips apart; then he sprang to his feet. "Oh, Nomé, Nomé! Do you mean that Lord Felvex is that man—that you love him?"

"Yes—I love him."

He fell on his knees and kissed her hand. "Oh, my poor Nomé! How glorious a chance, how terrible a chance you have!"

She looked at him wide-eyed.

"How glorious!" he repeated, and looked up at her with the rapt face of the enthusiast. "You love him! My God, it will be wonderful! Never, never has one had such an opportunity. We shall win ten years in advancing the propaganda!"

Even Nomé, accustomed to such lofty ideals of renunciation, wondered at Ospovat's simplicity and direct vision. There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that she could fail, that she would do else than welcome this blessing of her mission, giving all for the Cause. She almost resented the slight consideration he gave to her personal feelings. It annoyed her to have him so sure of her—to seem to make so little of her trial.

"Ospovat," she said, "if it were I who should be killed, and you who were the one to kill me, would you do it?"

"Why, of course!" he said, and his voice expressed surprise at the question. "It would be beautiful, Nomé! Don't men often kill the women they love? What other women do they ever kill? But you would not die alone, of course. I would kill myself immediately. Then it would be all right."

There was the noise as of a door

quickly shut at the other end of the room. Nomé and Ospovat came to themselves in an instant, for the scene had carried them into another world. Nomé went to the hall door and looked out. By the dining-room she saw Irma with Lady Felvex, both evidently angered. What had happened? She and Ospovat had talked without caution, and both doors had been open.

She dismissed the Jew immediately with a hurried farewell and then walked, her heart beating, to the dining-room.

"I am very sorry to say that I have just discharged Irma," said Lady Felvex. "I came downstairs to find her at the reception-room door, and I am much afraid she was eavesdropping." She took Nomé's cold hand in hers. "You do not know how badly I feel about this, especially after what probably happened in your own room. I do not know, of course, how long Irma had been listening, but I trust that she heard nothing important. I am so distressed about this having happened that I don't know what to do, but it cannot be helped now, and we must hope that nothing will come of it. We are safe for the future, at all events. To think that such a thing could happen in my house, to my guest! You will try to forgive it, dear?"

VIII

Nomé passed a sleepless night, the victim of foreboding. She had long been aware of Irma's envy, although it had been masked when the two met in the Circle. The only evidences of any strained relation had been those subtle pin-pricks of women's warfare, which are so slight as to pass unnoticed before men's eyes.

But a submerged feud had been going on for months. Nomé heretofore had been too proud to notice Irma's innuendoes, and had treated them with contempt. She could well afford to ignore them, feeling herself intellectually, as well as physically,

the superior. But now the breach was opened, and she felt that danger was imminent. She prepared herself to act upon the defensive.

A day passed, and nothing warned her of Irma's malignity. But the next morning word came from Mangus in the early post. It was a message in a cipher, adopted by the Circle since the renewed activity of the Movement, and its final commitment to its hazardous line of aggressive action.

The envelope, which bore a type-written address, contained a sheet of white paper upon which was pasted three scraps of newspaper. The first contained the words "THE TIMES," which was Mangus's own code-word. The second clipping bore the printed word "Personal" which signified a desired meeting, and the third was merely a date line showing that the interview was asked for the ensuing afternoon.

Although Nomé had for some time been able to go out alone, she had dared hold no communication with members of the Circle, and her walks, therefore, had been so lonely and aimless that she had taken scant advantage of her freedom. Ospovat's call had been surreptitious, and would probably never have been discovered had not Irma happened to overhear the footman's comments on Miss Destin's caller. The violation of the rule which had been imposed by Mangus was, of course, Ospovat's fault, but Nomé stood ready to bear the brunt of any possible rebuke for disobedience. Despite the prospect of Mangus's harshness, she felt now that she must see him and bring this long suspense to an end. What would be possible after he became aware of her indiscretion in making it impossible for herself to stay longer in the Felvex household, she did not much care. If necessary, she would take the law into her own hands, for her own soul's salvation.

So that afternoon she left word for Lady Felvex that she was to be away for a few hours, but would return in time for dinner. Leaving the house

alone, she walked to Piccadilly Circus and took a penny 'bus to Chelsea.

Mangus lived in one of a row of brick houses of the Restoration period on the Queen's Road, opposite the Royal Hospital. It stood a little back from the street, a high, wrought-iron fence shutting off a grass plat containing two plane trees. His rooms were on the top floor, whose three small dormer windows gave upon the inclosure of the Pensioners' Home. One casement was open, and, as she came to the gate, she caught sight of his head with its red fez as he sat smoking his pipe, watching for her appearance. He saw her before she had time to knock, and came down himself to let her in. She followed him up the stair through the old painted, paneled hall.

The room was low studded, its ceiling broken into sloping planes and its walls cut into strange corners and recesses; the whole covered with an old-fashioned figured paper, bulging like huge blisters where the dampness had loosened its paste. Two kitchen tables, a bookcase and a few worn easy-chairs all strewn with books, papers and pamphlets sufficed for furniture. For decoration, caricatures from French and German papers were pinned to the walls. The remains of a sixpenny lunch lay upon a tray on the narrow mantel over the fireplace, and the worn, soiled linoleum on the floor was littered with sundry articles from Mangus's somewhat reproachable wardrobe. An inner room showed through a low door, dark and gloomy, and beyond, a window, outside which the shadowy branches of an oak tree waved listlessly.

For awhile Mangus said nothing, pacing the room, sucking at his pipe, and casting an occasional lowering glance at the girl who sat disconsolately enough beside the hearth. Then he shot a question as deliberately as one might let fly an arrow.

"So you are in love with Lord Felvex, eh?"

It was sudden, but to Nomé it was neither kind nor unkind, coming from her grizzled chief. Its brusque

directness was but an evidence of his character. She knew how the paramount issue of the Cause had blotted out his sense of the lesser delicacies of personal consideration. This sort of brutality Nomé had always at once resented and admired, and now, as before, she was brought under the compelling spell of his irresistible will. The suspense and mental distress of the last month, besides, had cooled her fire somewhat, and there was a furtive sense of guilt upon her.

"I am," she said quietly. "Why?"

Mangus stopped and stared at her, sucking at his pipe. Then he shrugged his round shoulders.

"You have made good use of your time!" he sneered. "Upon my word, I thought you were going to deny it! I swear I hoped you were worth something more than this. Good God—to dabble in pink-and-white schoolgirl romance at such a time! It's incredible. What do you mean, girl? Have you lost your wits because you got your name in the papers? Why, if you had waded not more than one toe deep into the Movement I don't see how you could have stultified yourself so! And I almost believed in you; I fancied that emotion could take the place of intellect, by God! Put that feather in your cap, along with your other conquests—that you hoodwinked Luke Mangus! If you never do anything else, you can brag of that to Saint Peter. Talk about women's hearts! How long did it take you to go mad, then? How long did this frock-coated Lothario take to seduce you from honor and reason and faith? How long ago, Nomé, did you find out that you had become the latest toy of the Spirit of the Race?"

"About four years," she answered steadily.

His hands, which had been clasped behind his back, flew forward and he seized her hand. "Do you mean that Lord Felvex is the man you told me about—the man you loved before?"

"Of course! How else could this have happened?"

His whole manner had changed on

the instant, and as much as there was in him of gentleness came to the surface in a wave of tenderness that surprised her. "Oh, Nomé, I beg your pardon," he said. "Strange! I didn't think of that. I thought of everything but that—everything but the unexpected which I should have known would happen—the 'long arm of coincidence' we are forced to feel so miraculously often! Strange I couldn't understand!"

She shook herself free now, with rising anger. "Could you think so lightly of me that you could believe me capable of so cheap a piece of egoism? It was an affront to me—you should have known me better! What have I done—how have I treated the Cause that you could have thought of me as so futile, so unsteady a soul? Oh, I have been weak, I know, but I have not been so weak as that!"

"Indeed, I did not believe it, quite, Nomé. Until you admitted it, I believed it but the gossip of an envious woman. Now I understand—let it pass—we have no time for quarrels, you and I. The point is, you are in love again, and that puts a new face on the whole matter. I'm sorry for you, girl. It is hard; but if you have given so much for the Cause, you must give more. Only, someone else must do the work." He eyed her keenly under his heavy brows.

"Someone else?" she repeated.

"Certainly!" Mangus replied. "Surely you cannot do it now!"

She took his right hand in both hers and grasped it hard.

"Ah, you'll not go back on me, Mangus, will you? You've not lost faith in me because I failed the first time? What can the Cause ask that I will not give—and do!"

He watched her as a physician watches a patient through a crisis, smiling at her burst of enthusiasm. "What can it ask of you, Nomé? An ounce of lead, and a steady eye behind it—an eye without tears, and a finger that will not tremble! And that you will never have to give, I fear. And yet—if you *could* do it!"

"I shall!"

"If you could do it, no one else would do so well!"

"I can!"

"If you could do it," he said again, "the affair would have an *éclat* that would be worth more to us than twenty assassinations. You are already well known in London—we may say you are famous. By rescuing the minister you have a news value to the papers. Everything that can be found out about you will be printed. And you yourself, if you sacrifice the last shred of your privacy, can intensify the sensation a thousand-fold. No one is better qualified for such a work. You might even write something that would be printed after the affair—if it were not suppressed, it would be read by three million men the next day!"

"I have written something," Nomé admitted timidly. "I have been keeping a journal for a month, and it might well be used for propaganda purposes, if I succeed."

"By God!" he cried, "have you, then? Do you see the dramatic possibilities of that? Oh, I'll not spare you now! I'll have every drop of your blood! I'll strip you naked, heaven help me! You'll go down into the arena for wild beasts to devour, but there'll be millions to see you die, and it will not be for nothing. Oh, you'll be a picturesque heroine, if I can manage it! We'll send you like a fire-ship into the enemy's fleet. You've been indiscreet, girl—it was madness to endanger our plan by putting anything into writing, but I'll forgive that now! There have been martyrs before, Nomé, but when we burn you at the stake the fire will light up the world! By God, I envy you!"

He looked at her now, much as one looks at a thoroughbred horse before the race, noting her points. Not one escaped him. Her burning black eyes, the fresh, dainty color mantling her cheeks, the rare grace of her spirited head set so buoyantly upon the perfect neck, her gracile, poetic hands—and, above all, the divine fervor of her soul, illuminating every glance, every

gesture, ringing in every cadence of her voice. She sat, submissive to his scrutiny, her cheek on fire with the violence of his admiration and the heart-breaking cruelty of the picture he had painted. It cut her as with knives, but the pain exalted her—she rose to the ecstasy of sacrifice, kindling to a sublime sense of impersonality under the spell.

"I had hoped that you would enter the secret service with Madame Spiritan," he went on, "for we need help there. Your charms would serve, if you were willing to spend them on aristocratic dupes, the way Belle Spiritan does. But you're not the temperament to go into the subtleties of such machinations—I see that now. You're not clever enough for an international spy. You're too intense, you're too egoistic to adapt yourself to the thousand polite acts that are necessary. Belle Spiritan's quite the type for that—you're for the grand heroics. You are to advertise the Cause, to illuminate our errand and purpose, as I'm to stand behind you all and pull the wires. What does it matter who gets the fame or the reward or the pain and the shame, so long as the Cause goes on? Now, for your sentimental problem I don't care a whit, except as it weakens your nerve. Before you went out, that night, I asked you if you could kill the man you loved, if the Cause required it. Can you make the same answer now?"

"I can—you know I can! But it must be soon. For God's sake, let the thing come quickly!"

"How can I be sure?" he insisted. "You are, emotionally, in a state of unstable equilibrium. It is too much to ask of a woman. Your heart must revolt!"

"Can't you see," she cried, "that I have gone too far, now, to recede? Had I known, that night, who Lord Felvex was, I might have wavered for a moment, though I would have tried my best. But now, when I have once failed after having accepted the errand, how can I give it up till it is accom-

plished? How can I ever face myself till I have proved myself worthy of this sacrifice? How can I now prefer my own personal happiness to the good of the Cause? I must trust to your judgment that no other victim will serve, but I beg you to try me. Most of all, most potent and paramount of all reasons—I have confessed my love to Lord Felvex!"

"What? You have spoken to him of this?"

"I have spoken. In fact, I have agreed to leave his house within a week. For that reason alone it must be done soon. Can't it be done tonight?"

"What mischief else have you done, with your damned emotions?" he asked bitterly. "A week, you said? Well, I hope that will suffice. But it is not all so easy as you think. I am afraid of the Circle. Much has happened since you left, and I am very anxious and uncertain."

"For a month—ever since the affair in Westchester Square—the Circle has been in a bad state. O'Brien has made a lot of trouble. You have been suspected, and your loyalty has now been directly impeached. It has been all I could do to hold the members under my control. And it is more than ever before necessary to hold them. We are not nearly so strong as we were. We are obtaining no new recruits, while the foreign sections are holding their own, and more. I cannot afford to go against the opinions of the majority now, for we are near a crisis. I must play them as one plays children to hold the Circle together, or there will be a split and O'Brien will lead a seceding party that will hurt us a good deal with its indiscretion. I have had my finger on the pulse of this affair, and I know to a dot just how far I can go. Previously, I have swayed them, and I have convinced the majority that we must adopt Fabian tactics, awaiting the proper time to strike. But I have carried the policy of 'masterly inactivity' as far as it will go, and luckily, there is no necessity of delaying matters much longer."

"But now, Irma Strieb has threat-

ened the whole situation with her damnable jealousy of you. I understand it now, and I don't see why I didn't notice it before. She should never have been sent to Lord Felvex's house, and least of all as a servant. She is dangerous. She has only hinted before, but now she knows your relations with Felvex, and she has joined O'Brien to explode the information in the Circle, and if she does, it may blow me up with you. I can't force them any longer—they must be managed. My own influence is tottering, but if I can only hold them for two days I'll have no trouble in regaining all my power, and more."

"But why have you delayed so long, Mangus?" Nomé asked. "It seems to me that you should have struck long ago. If we made our demonstration, the general danger would hold the Circle together, wouldn't it?"

Mangus spoke in a lower key.

"I must confide in you," he said. "I can't play my hand alone any longer. The situation is critical. You must know, from what Belle Spiritan told you, that we are involved in larger issues than the mere assassination of one man who happens to have been our enemy, though that is all O'Brien believes, or cares. For two years I have been consolidating the foreign sections until we can act together along a single line of attack, rationally and vigorously, in a truly international movement. I have spent the best part of my life preparing for this. Joined with me, now, in a secret coalition, are the chiefs of every foreign section, and they are in constant communication with me through a central operator under my orders at Berne. He acts as a bureau of information and direction, but the key to the whole situation is in my hand. My will is supreme in the international committee, but I shall lose all influence if I cannot hold my own section."

"Why not tell the Circle?" asked Nomé.

"It would be too dangerous," he replied. "This action is too important. One can never be sure there are no

spies in our camp. It was for that reason I dared not tell them, last month, just what work was planned for you. Of course they know now. But if word leaked out, every foreign section would be in danger, and most of the members on the Continent are marked men. Such news has leaked out before, and now we are closely watched. A year ago we perfected all the details for an international demonstration. Every section was pledged to act in unison on a certain day. The time was set, the agents selected, the victims were chosen. Every single attempt failed!"

"Then Lord Felvex's death was no part of such a plot?" Nomé asked.

"Not then, for the thing seemed impossible. Matters have been adjusted since. Now I am only awaiting news from Berne that every section is ready, and that the day is set. Each section, however, except for the heads, believes its own act to be independent. But I need not tell you of the enormous effect of several simultaneous and successful strokes all over Europe!"

Nomé had listened, fascinated by the details of the plot as it was unrolled before her, rising to the romance of the conspiracy with the eager interest of a child.

"This is war!" she exclaimed. "You have said enough to steady me, even if I had weakened. This is what I have longed for! It is glorious! I am sorry that I have been so querulous, while you have been doing the work of a Titan. I am ready, and I claim my privilege to give my life to this magnificent stroke. To think that the success of it should be endangered by malice and envy, just now, when we should be most strongly united, is dreadful."

"You see my position," said Mangus. "I must have a sure hand. The last attempt was made partially to satisfy O'Brien and his party, who were clamoring for action. I dared not explain why I wanted to wait. Now we can strike, and we shall strike hard; we shall strike again and again while there is one of us left—till we have

forced Humanity to recognize what we stand for."

"How far has O'Brien gone?" Nomé asked. "Can't you convince him that I have delayed only by your orders?"

"I have handled O'Brien well enough so far—it is Irma Strieb who is making mischief now. The two of them are hatching some scheme, and I dare not oppose them too far. It may be that they will compel a new casting of lots, thinking that you are not to be trusted. If you could only convince them that you are, that you can and will do this thing, it would be far better than for me to exert my authority. Perhaps you might carry them with you—you have never failed before—if they would give you a chance to talk."

"Let me try! I must do this thing. If I do not, it spells ruin for me. If I am discountenanced by the Circle I have nothing left to live for. I have cast my lot irrevocably with the Cause—I cannot go to Lord Felvex now, I cannot go back to my old place at home."

"Listen!" said Mangus. "The Circle meets this evening. You will find them on the offensive, a majority, no doubt, against you. But you might try to conciliate them. That is the reason I sent for you. The time is so near now, that I cannot risk any uncertainty or quarreling. What the Circle decides, I must accept. We may have word from Berne at any moment, and that moment we must strike. Can you come tonight? We meet at seven o'clock."

"I will come," Nomé answered. "I left word that I would be at home for dinner, but I can explain that. I think I can stay away till ten safely enough, without causing any alarm. But Lady Felvex receives tonight, and I must be there, as she has invited several friends to meet me."

"Yes, I know," said Mangus. "Belle Spiritan will be there. Any word to you I need to send, later in the evening, I can get to her. Now you must dine alone. I dare not go with you, for the police are very

active nowadays. And the moment the blow falls London will be alive with detectives. We have given up our headquarters in Bloomsbury, and we are meeting in the King's Road. I'll give you directions for finding the place."

IX

OFF the King's Road, in Chelsea, between the "Seven Bells" and the Vestry Hall, stands a two-story brick building, decorated in the Georgian style. It is ornate, considering its original use as a brass-foundry. A huge iron gate supported by massive stone posts shuts it off from the street, and passing through this, one goes up a sort of lane, between brick walls, to the imposing front. This approach is vulgarized by rows of terra-cotta chimney-pots, for the storage of which the building is now used, and permits one to get close enough to the facade of the edifice to examine its sadly damaged details. In the cellar of this place, several compartments of which were at this time used for wine-vaults, the Circle met.

There is another less conspicuous entrance to the cellars, however, and to this Nomé was directed. Corrington street leads off the King's Road, and before, in its wanderings, it regains that thoroughfare it turns two right angles, both toward the left. A little bun-shop upon the first part of this passage had been rented by Mangus, and opposite the rear door of the property one found a side entrance to the drain-pipe works.

Nomé, at about seven o'clock, entered the shop and saw a familiar figure sitting behind the counter, one of the women of the Circle. A nod was given and exchanged, and, without a word being spoken, Nomé was directed by a gesture through a tiny bed-sitting-room to the rear door. She opened this, took three or four steps across a paved close, and opened the great door of the works.

She found herself in a square, bare, lofty anteroom, facing a huge pair of

double doors. At her left was a wooden hatchway covering a stair leading downward. Upon the solid framework of this Ospovat was waiting.

He came to her and kissed her hand.

"Oh, Nomé, I'm so glad you came!" he said. "I was so afraid you would not be able to get here. Things have gone far, but I know you can make them believe in you."

"I shall try. Have they all come?"

"O'Brien and Mangus and Irma Strieb you may be sure are here early, and about a dozen have come. It is not seven yet."

"What is the need of this extra precaution? Is there any new danger?"

"Mangus has been watched, and O'Brien, too. A week ago Frisk was arrested and has been held, though they have no evidence. We can't be too careful, for there'll be a hue and cry as soon as anything is done. I am terribly afraid that my call on you may have aroused suspicion, but I don't know whether the police have marked me or not."

He lifted the heavy wooden doors and led the way down the steep stairway along a short passage lighted by a single candle set in a saucer. Turning a corner to the right, they found themselves in a wide cellar, two walls of which were lined with rows of casks piled high to the ceiling, festooned with cobwebs. A small table stood on the dirt floor. Upon it was a lamp whose rays shone upon the faces of Mangus and O'Brien seated together in earnest conversation. The old leader's brows were drawn tensely, tracing a web of lines across his forehead and about his deep-set eyes. The Fenian's red countenance, loose lip and watery eyes gave him more the appearance of a bull than usual. Sitting and standing in groups other members were waiting for the rest of the Circle to appear.

Ospovat retraced his steps to stand guard at the head of the stairs, and Nomé walked into the room. Irma Strieb's gaze was fixed upon her, like a waiting bayonet.

O'Brien drew back as Nomé approached him and extended her hand.

"Is it as bad as that, O'Brien?" she asked calmly.

"Faith, that's for you to tell us," he replied.

"I have nothing to tell you that you shouldn't know already. When I give my friendship I do not take it away at the whim, like you!"

"What you gave was a soap-bubble, I fear, girl, and a breath of high life has broke it entirely."

"You do me wrong, O'Brien, and you know it! You have a quick, Irish temper, and it will turn again when you know me better."

"I know too much now. I could stand no more, even if you were my own daughter, as I liked to think you, Nomé!"

Mangus interrupted. "No more of this, now! We're not here to snarl over personal quarrels, like children. God! Was there ever a cause so holy that it did not break up into factions because of jealous bickerings? We'll have you say what you have to say when we are all here, O'Brien, and then Nomé can answer as she likes. Leave us a minute, please, I want to talk to her."

O'Brien turned away to join Irma Strieb and stood with a knot of their friends in one corner of the room, and Nomé sat down at the table wearily.

"O'Brien is in an ugly mood," Mangus said in a low tone. "You may have a hard time winning him over, but I trust you to do it. Irma Strieb is more dangerous. She's capable of anything. I shall have her watched after tonight. When I think of the trouble they are making now when all should go smoothly, I think I'd not hesitate to use force, if necessary. But I can't show my hand to anyone but you yet. God! if I had but tools to work with, I could start a revolution tomorrow!"

"Have you any news?"

"Things are going well. Berne is only waiting for word from Vienna and Madrid. The train is all set, and the match ready. That's why this trouble exasperates me. We *must* win this time! I'll make any sacrifice in

order not to fail. I'll not hesitate to sacrifice *you*, if necessary!"

There were still many of the Circle who were willing to welcome Nomé, for the disaffection, centering in O'Brien and Irma Strieb, weakened as it radiated through the group. Half a dozen or more shook her hand, called her "comrade" and fell again under the spell of her personal magnetism and earnestness. These had not known, when she was selected for the hazard of the dice, just what the business in hand was—for all that had been left to Mangus—but, as the event had turned out, the work she had had to do was, of course, discovered. It was no longer a secret that Lord Felvex had been marked for death, and that the deed was still to be done. The consciousness of this fatal mission now with them made the talk more open, for they all shared a common risk. Their eagerness for immediate action was the result of this nervous strain, and the long delay imposed by Mangus had aroused great dissatisfaction.

The numbers increased till, at a quarter-past seven, some twenty persons were present, the women being greatly in the minority. The meetings were always informal, controlled by Mangus's peremptory influence, the definite business of detail being managed by a small committee selected by him. He now called the assembly to order in form.

There was but the single lamp on the table in the centre of the room, and this shone full on the leader's face. The members sat or stood in front of him and at the sides of the cellar. From the entrance at the end of the passage the scene was as if set upon a stage, the back wall of which was formed of the tiers of wine casks, like an enormous honeycomb. Away from the light all was shadowy and ill defined, where arched openings in the walls led to dark caves to the right and left.

Mangus rose and began:

"We have come here tonight, comrades, for but one purpose, and that must be settled as quickly as possible.

It should not take long. I have sent for Comrade Nomé Destin, that she may speak for herself in answer to any charge that may be formally brought against her. I must warn you all that we are approaching a crisis in the affairs of the Movement, and we are one and all in serious danger. To increase that peril by petty strife and revenge may be fatal to the Cause. Comrades have, before this, been taken from us, and we are waging a war that must claim its victims from our side as well as from our enemies.

"So far, in our meetings, we have avoided mentioning any specific objects, and you have left to me the planning and execution of them. Tonight that object must be named. Our present purpose is murder. So men call it, and, though we believe we are using it to noble ends, the one crime binds us together with the same guilt. Our last attempt was frustrated by chance——"

"By cowardice, why don't ye say!" O'Brien burst in.

"But the same chance will render a second attempt, if successful, more useful to the Cause than if the first had succeeded. I cannot and will not explain the precise causes of my delay in ordering a second trial. You must trust me there, implicitly. It is enough to say that it is necessary to wait a certain time, and when that time has come, everything you have grumbled at will be made clear. Nomé Destin was chosen for the assassination, and, by your rule, she should still stand ready to carry out the mission. Has anyone any objection to this?"

O'Brien arose, wiping the sweat from his brow. Nomé, sitting beside Mangus, watched the Irishman, with her hand on her heart.

"I protest!" said O'Brien, and laid a ponderous fist upon the table. "Nomé Destin is proven a traitor to this Cause. She was reared in the lap of luxury, and she has returned to her kind. She is no more one of us in spirit or in deed. She has fallen into the trap set by scheming and effete aristocrats, and she has accepted the

pomp and extravagance of the privileged leisure classes as the station to which her birth entitled her—she has made friends with the Philistines and the Amorites——"

Mangus leaned forward past the lamp and pointed a bony finger at the loud-mouthed Fenian.

"Drop that hackneyed whine, for God's sake, O'Brien! Do you think you are addressing a public-house audience of drunken loafers and cab-drivers? Are you on the tail of a cart contesting a bye-election for a demagogue like yourself? Man, we're talking of red, bloody murder, and we're hunted by the police at this moment! And you slaver cheap rhetoric at us like a board-school graduate! Come out with what you have to say, and don't gabble at the gallery like a fool!"

O'Brien, who was working himself up to the proper pitch, was for a moment disconcerted. Then he broke out afresh, in full brogue:

"And did yez see her a-ridin' forth in a foine chariot with his bloody lordship, if ye plaze? Did yez see her at dinner atin' off thim gold plates wid the man she was sint for to kill?"

"My orders!" snapped Mangus. "My orders were for her to wait, and to wait, and always to wait, and to watch while she waited. What would you have her do?—sulk and brood, or talk of the Movement to its sworn enemy, as no doubt you would have done with your wagging Irish tongue that can't sit still in your mouth, and lose all in an afternoon? She has no need to answer such gammon!"

"And how about the shootin', thin?" O'Brien growled. "Was she sint forth to do a minister of police to death, or to pot-hunt for men who have been forced by that same blackguard out of the chance to make an honest livin'? And was it to save his wretched piffin' life she was sint out for—him who has jailed her own comrades of the Cause, and will have half of us swingin' on the gallows yet, by God? Did yez order that, too, you who are secret chief, and give your orders and have your own favorites?"

"She shot at him and missed. Ospovat saw her—you heard his story!" Mangus hazarded, hoping that, to save the point, Nomé would keep silent on this detail. But she would not. She sprang to her feet.

"It's a lie! I did not. I shot at the robbers deliberately! Do you think I would shelter myself behind an excuse like that? I saw Lord Felvex being beaten to death by thugs, and how could the Cause profit by a massacre like that! Have we no dignity? Was it merely his death we wanted? The deed was to ring out like a trumpet call in solemn warning, not squeak out its little message like a penny whistle! My hands were to be steeped in blood, but not soiled by mud and filth!"

"Then have in Ospovat, too!" O'Brien shouted. "What did he lie to us for? I say there's a nest of treachery here, and we might as well clean it out now. Have him in!"

Mangus tried his best to quell the rising tumult, but O'Brien's backing encouraged him. Mangus turned to Irma Strieb.

"Irma, take Ospovat's place at the door!" he commanded.

"I shall not," she answered, "not till I have spoken, too. I can tell you something of Ospovat, and of Nomé Destin as well, and of the two together and Lord Felvex thrown into the bargain!"

"Tell it out! Tell it out, thin; faith, it's high time for a few words of truth!" cried O'Brien.

The storm broke on Irma's face as she pointed to Nomé. "You have done the fine lady long enough!" she barked in her rage. "I was only fit to be your servant, was I? You have worn the jewels and the kid gloves ever since you came into the Movement to bedevil this Circle with your sheep's eyes, and ever since you came in I've had all the scrapings and the sour swill! You are the queen and I am the drudge. But what work there is for me to do, I do it, while you sit in silks and satins in the drawing-room and make love to your Lord Felvex, under her ladyship's own eyes! Yes, and boast of

it! I heard it from your own lips, and Ospovat won't dare say I lie."

She turned from Nomé to the members, who listened breathlessly. "What do you think of this, comrades? Will you intrust the work of the Cause to a hussy who lives in idleness and luxury while we are hunted from pillar to post by the police? And meanwhile, she sweetens her time with the love and kisses of our worst enemy! Ask her, and see if she denies it! She will never kill that man!"

She sat down and watched for Nomé to answer, her strong yellow teeth showing through the rift between her lips, her red brows lowered, and her coarse hands clenched.

Nomé's breath was coming and going in anger, and her eyes blazed. She rose now, and faced the little assembly. Even in that moment, however, she could not forbear to place herself so that the lamplight should strike her to advantage.

"There is nothing I need to answer, except Irma's last words," she said. "She said that I would never kill Lord Felvex, and she spoke falsely. It is too late for me to mask myself and conceal the things that I hoped with all modesty to keep from you. Since I must think no more of my pride, let me say that it is true that I do love Lord Felvex—I have loved him for four years! I did not know that it was he whom I was appointed to kill—but it would not have mattered, as it does not matter now. I will not answer as to my life at Lady Felvex's house—Irma's insinuations are beneath contempt, and you, who know what I am, will only be sorry for her, that she has sunk so low as to accuse me. But now I claim my privilege of carrying out my appointed errand. I have had my Calvary, let me win my resurrection, my Easter! I have had enough of this pitiful thing called Life—give me that precious, mysterious gift called Death! I am sworn to the Cause—there can be no life left for me, if I am convicted of treason. Do you think that I, who stood ready to sacrifice my life, cannot

sacrifice my love also? I will give his life with mine—there is no other way! It is my right—I was appointed by Fate. What if another victim were chosen to die in my place? Still my lover must die, and if he must go, let me at least go with him. Why not? Are we not all pledged to sacrifice and agony? Would not any one of you do it, were you in my place? We claim no personal feelings here, in this Circle, and I believe that each one of us here is true. O'Brien, Irma, I bear no malice toward you. I believe your attack was caused only by your desire for the good of our Cause. I have nothing to forgive. Only, let me do this thing—let me give myself and all I possess to the Cause! The balm of Time, the wrappings of Distance, all have been torn from my heart's wound. I bleed, and the old familiar love-pain and mortal anguish have returned. I, who have been so long dead, am alive again, and I pray to be sent back into forgetfulness. But, if I am perishable, let me perish resisting—if the void awaits me, do not let me act so as to deserve it! I have a giant in me that is stronger than this pigmy of Love who so torments me. Though I thrill as the sap to spring, I would think, not feel. There is another Order, greater than this disorder in my heart, and I would bear it witness. Believe in me, comrades, as you have believed before, trust me, and let me go to eternal peace!"

She sat down, quivering with the passion of her grief, and let her face fall in her hands. O'Brien, mercurial, susceptible as ever to her fascinating, intense temperament, pushed up to her and laid his great hairy hand upon her shoulder.

"Mavourneen," he whispered, sobbing, "forgive me, and let me love you again!"

Others swarmed up to her and protested their allegiance. She had carried the Circle with her, as she had always carried it, with her silvery tongue and the picturesque abandon of her emotion. But Irma Strieb held herself still aloof, with a sneer curling her face.

"How about Ospovat, then, who tried to fool us with his cock-and-bull story?" she said, in a raucous tone.

"Go and send him down!" said Mangus. "Take his place at the door and wait there. You have done enough mischief here!"

She left, sullenly, and all breathed freer with the withdrawal of her spite.

For awhile Nomé was the centre of a group of comrades, each one of which was anxious of having a farewell word with her. She gave all the color there was to the Circle, for the others were, compared with her, uninspired. Nevertheless, they were all in solemn earnest, determined, tragic, desperate. Upon the dull red heat of their convictions Nomé's emotional fervor danced like a lambent flame, lighting their assemblies with flickering poetic lights. All eyes followed her, all ears listened, she was illumination to their dull, starved hearts, embittered with the wrongs they sought to remedy.

She feasted on this new, last banquet of admiration, and drank deep of the wine of praise so loyally held to her lips, till Mangus, drawing her apart for his last instructions, left the members grouped about the table.

"Nomé," he said in a low voice, "all's not right yet! Irma has set me thinking. I'm not sure of her. She must be watched. If anything should go wrong now, God help the Cause—for we can't. Now I daren't trust you with her again—I'm afraid of her jealousy. Don't go up the stairway you came in by; there's a door out of that cellar over there, that leads up to the front of the building. Here's a key to the outside door. Take it and, when you can slip out unobserved, make haste. I'll talk to them so they won't notice you. And remember the word, '*It is only one of many*'—and shoot to kill! No fumbling! Everything is staked on your nerve. Good-bye, girl, and Heaven bless you!"

He turned to the group about the table, leaving Nomé in the shadow of the wall.

Irma Strieb made her way to the

passage, up the steep wooden stairs, and knocked upon the double doors that ceiled the opening above her head. Ospovat lifted them, and gave a hand to help her up.

"Go down to your bread-and-butter-faced mistress," she said. "She's bewitched them again. I'm glad to be out of sight of the fools down there. They're led about by the nose like cattle. I'm to stay at the door here."

He was in no mood to talk to her. He was burning for a sight of Nomé, again triumphant, and eager to rejoice in her victory. He handed Irma the padlock and key, and ran down. At the second step he tripped, lost his balance, and, without a cry, fell over the side of the steps, striking his head upon the paved floor below. As he dropped he threw himself toward the wall. This carried him to the left of the foot of the stair, where he lay unconscious.

Irma, meanwhile, had gone to the outer door, looking down the little lane. For a moment she waited, filled with black thoughts, and the jeering expression on her face changed to something more sinister. She hesitated, took a step toward the hatchway and stood undecided. Then, raising the doors part way, she bent her head down to listen. A subdued babble of voices came to her, and through it she heard Nomé speaking. She pressed her lips together and nodded her head. Then, dropping the door, she went out of the building, into the lane, and walked down the King's Road toward Sloane street.

In ten minutes she was back, and the thing was done. She had enough to think of now to make her brain reel, but in her agony she tried to keep her mind upon Nomé—Nomé, who had beaten her at every point—who had hoodwinked and fascinated her way to the position of a heroine, never paying for her promises in real endeavor. She listened again at the crack of the doors, and fed her jealous rage upon the ring of Nomé's voice, as it came to her, clear and deep as a bell. How she hated it, and Nomé's beauty! Then the voice stopped. There was a buzz-

ing chorus, then O'Brien spoke and laughed his peal of burly noise. Her lip writhed to think how weak he was, and how easily cajoled.

Then the great side doors swung open, and a police captain entered to her.

"Are they still there?" he whispered.

Irma nodded. Her breath came faster now.

He put his head outside and beckoned. A file of policemen came in, and with them several men in citizen's clothes. The doors were silently lifted, and one after another they crept down into the passage below, and formed for the rush. The captain put out the solitary candle. Then they were lost to Irma's sight, like rats in a hole, and she waited for the attack, her eyes staring into the dark, her breast heaving convulsively.

She heard a muttered command, and the force moved down toward the cellar where a dim glow illuminated them, making them as shadowy and unreal as ghosts. Then, a single cry echoed along the passage and rose to her ears. It was O'Brien's voice ringing with terror—then a shot rang out, the glow faded. A babel of fierce shouts filled the dark.

Irma stepped from the stair, threw the doors down with a bang and snapped the padlock into the hasp, locking in friends and foes. Then she threw herself upon the closed hatchway and put her ear to the crack.

For a long time she listened, and her wonder increased. All, now, was as still as death. She could not understand it. There should be such a fight below as would make her shudder at her double revenge. She cared not who fell, all was lost for her. Her mind was cast loose from reason and struggled with blind spite and rage. They should all die, comrade and enemy, the Circle with the police, battling to the end.

It was strange, though, that everything was so quiet! She had expected and feared to hear the horrible discord of carnage, shrieks for help, blows and pistol-shots, and, at least, an attempt

to batter open the doors. Instead—nothing. It was as if the wine-cellar were empty and all her treachery a hideous nightmare.

Her first fury had abated to a dazed perplexity; she could not think. She could neither escape, nor go for help, nor wait. How could forty men and women be swallowed up and disappear into the dark without a sound? She thought she would go mad unless she found out—if, indeed, she were not mad already.

She wearily unlocked the padlock and heaved open the doors. Her feet seemed to be of lead as she stepped down, stair by stair, like a somnambulist. She had no fear or horror, no terror—only a stupefied wonder at the perversity of her brain. Halfway along the passage she stumbled upon a body that lay across her path and heard it move stealthily away, without a word or moan. Near the entrance to the cellar she groped about for the candle, struck a match and held the light over her head.

She had one glance—cowering, terrified men everywhere, flattened against the walls, behind chairs and table, crouching in corners, lying prone and supine upon the dirt floor, friend and foe mingled, shuddering away from one another, doubting horribly, in that darkness, the least sound, the slightest movement. Every man was afraid of every other, fearing to strike lest he should hit a friend, fearing to speak lest he should betray his presence to an enemy. It was a deadlock of horror. The flaring light of her candle picked out the whites of eyes and policemen's buttons and hands held fearfully over shocked faces—all this in one flash she saw.

Then the men started, with a common impulse, breaking for the passage, to escape from the pen. Before she was hurtled aside a violent bolt of fire darted from a corner—there was a deafening report and a sharp sting of pain in her breast.

Irma Strieb fell to the floor, and a crazed, panic-stricken crowd of men rushed over her.

X

"*LIFE* is so interesting!" Madame Spiritan was saying. "Isn't human nature just splendid? It's enough for me just to sit and watch people, they're all so different and original, and everyone has their own character and aura and psychic filament-things seeking out for their affinities—do you believe in affinities?—and I never did see why their thought-waves don't get all tangled up—perhaps they do, after all; things are usually in such a dreadful mess, aren't they? It's really a wonder that we get along as well as we do. Sometimes I wish I were a fly on the ceiling just to look down at all these foolish creatures, with suckers, or whatever they are, on my feet. No doubt flies are quite as much absorbed in their own affairs as we are, though, and make love for a business, as they do in society, only they increase and multiply more, and it never occurs to them that we are bothering with taxes and esoteric phenomena and fourth dimensions, whatever that is. Mercy me! I never could see why people wanted to bother themselves about any other kind of a thickness; one's quite enough for me, and when a woman has passed thirty and don't worry about getting fat I'm perfectly convinced she's a fool."

She paused and took up her fan, bending gracefully, to smile with abandoned coquetry at Count Pribdoff. But she did not use her eyes upon the count alone. Her gaze made quick adventures about the room, seeking something and returning to the Russian's face. Even as she raised her eyebrows at him, speeding a languishing phrase, her darting eye would go and come again.

Lady Felvex's rooms had filled, but Nomé had not yet returned. She was eagerly awaited by many who had been promised sight of her, for, though she had ceased to be the nine days' wonder in town, so few persons had seen her that much curiosity was still alive. Tales of her beauty and her charm had magnified the popular in-

terest in her adventure, and, as she easily took a prominent place in Lady Felvex's assemblies, her appearance had always provoked much whispering. One heard her name upon many lips tonight. Lady Felvex was visibly embarrassed in accounting lamely for her guest's absence, and one or two were bold enough to suspect Lord Felvex of being worried, if not alarmed, at her absence. Nomé had not returned home for dinner. Count Pribdoff raised his eyebrows and smiled to Madame Spiritan at the news, and that vivacious lady tapped him on the cheek with her fan.

Host and hostess stood to receive their guests where they could get a clear view of the door, toward which they cast frequent glances.

A stream of visitors entered, paid their respects and lounged away, not unusually to the chattering group where Madame Spiritan entertained a crowd of men with bewildering skill. Following a group of Lady Felvex's friends, toward ten o'clock, a young man, immaculately dressed, smoothly shaven, with quick, alert eyes, entered the door, was announced as "Mr. Brillish," and stood awaiting his chance to speak his word of greeting. Lady Felvex flung a look of inquiry at her husband.

"A man from the office," said the minister. "Pass him over to me with a few words."

The young man approached, and the welcome he received from his hostess was in no respect to be distinguished from that which she had given her own friends. The two exchanged complimentary commonplaces, after which Mr. Brillish stepped up to Lord Felvex. The two, in speaking, gradually edged away from the nearby guests.

"We located the gang tonight, my lord," said Brillish.

"Well?" was the minister's reply.

"Raided this evening at about eight o'clock. We took twelve after a pretty tough fight."

"Who were they?"

"O'Brien, Lasker, Norwell, Hertzberg and Devonwall, and more of that

set we had not known, and two women."

The minister pulled at his mustache. Then, smiling across the room at a lady who had playfully shaken her fan at him, he said:

"Who were the women?"

"One was the Strieb woman, who was here. She was shot in the lungs and will die. The other one was unknown to us."

Lord Felvex's voice was well mastered as he asked: "What was she like?"

"Dark, probably Spanish, brown eyes, rather good clothes, intelligent. We hope to find out who she is before morning. She may be the woman Brussels was looking for. But it looks nasty. If I might take the liberty of warning you, my lord, of asking you to take precautions——"

"You may not. This is no surprise to me. How did you find them?"

"That's the curious part. The Strieb woman gave information at the Chelsea station, while she was supposed to be on guard. They were meeting in an old wine-cellar. Twelve men were sent, and as soon as they got down into the cellar, the lights went out and the whole lot were locked in a dark pen. The men were ordered not to shoot unless absolutely necessary, but even if they had not, they would have been afraid of killing one another. Then the Strieb woman came down with a light, thinking it was all over, I fancy, and the captain broke for the door, got his men into the passage, and the rest was easy enough."

"You are sure there was no one of consequence besides O'Brien?"

"No one we know. Mangus must have got out before the row, by some other exit."

"I'm sorry. I must have that man. He's worth more than all the rest put together."

"We are after him tonight."

"See that you get him. That's all?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Won't you stay, Mr. Brillish?" The words were spoken as the company closed in upon the two.

"Thank you, my lord, I must leave immediately."

Both men bowed, and Mr. Brillish withdrew. Lord Felvex took his place at his wife's side.

"I can't think what has become of Nomé," she said. "I am getting alarmed. It is most extraordinary."

"She will come; don't be worried," said Lord Felvex, but his tone was not convinced.

Madame Spiritan, having watched the colloquy between the two men as closely as possible, now moved up to her hosts.

"I trust we shall not be disappointed in meeting Miss Destin tonight," she said cooingly.

"Lord Felvex has just reassured me," said Lady Felvex. "Miss Destin was away for the afternoon and has been detained longer than she expected. She will surely be here before long."

"I am much relieved to hear that," was the reply, and Madame Spiritan sauntered away with the count and renewed her prattle.

She had already received news of the raid, but the details of the affair were unknown to her. She felt herself fairly secure in her position, but she waited anxiously for Nomé's appearance, for it was scarcely to be expected that, with the information now undoubtedly in the hands of the police, the girl was not in grave danger. Madame Spiritan wondered how much the minister already knew. As she masked her doubts and took up her persiflage with Count Pribdoff again, Colonel Grennyngs came into the drawing-room, and, after a few words with Lord and Lady Felvex, trotted up to Madame Spiritan's side.

"How dare you leave so soon, Belle?" he complained. "D'you know I gadded round to your place to bring over that bull pup I promised, you know, and, by Jove, you were gone! Think of your getting away before ten! I was in no end of a rage! He's a beauty, too; all full of points and own grandson of Bultitude Third! And I say, that Céleste of yours is a decent little

thing, don't you know! I don't see how you dare keep such a pretty gal with you, Belle!"

"Keep your hands off Céleste," said Count Pribdoff. "I discovered her, you know!"

"If she's discovered by you she's lost!" said the colonel.

"Peaches and cream, peaches and cream," murmured the count.

"And a spoon," added Madame Spiritan.

"And I say, she showed me a box of roses that had just come for you, Belle—I had a mind to bring some over," said Colonel Grennyngs.

"White roses?" Madame Spiritan asked, with a sudden show of interest.

"No, red."

"Pshaw, how silly—of *course* they were white. You know I never wear red roses."

"But they were red—I know they were red."

"You're quite sure?"

"Positive!"

"As if it mattered!" laughed Count Pribdoff.

"It matters a good deal," asserted Madame Spiritan. "You evidently don't believe in symbolism."

"Ah—one doesn't send white roses to a married woman, of course."

"Nonsense! I didn't mean that."

"Red is for blood," said the colonel eloquently.

"Or for wine," put in Count Pribdoff.

"Also for currant jelly and strawberries—there's a relativity in all vibration," said Madame Spiritan.

"You don't tell me!" replied the colonel. "Now, I suppose that's one of your clever jokes!"

A flutter of whispers interrupted them, and they turned to see Nomé, star-eyed, in black velvet, enter the room with a grace and finished manner that betrayed no hint of the crisis she had just passed. Madame Spiritan's eyes softened a little as she watched the girl, and her hand was clenched nervously.

Lady Felvex came halfway to meet her guest. Nomé was almost breath-

less with the haste she had made in dressing.

"I am so sorry that I was detained," she said. "I met an old friend and was persuaded to stay for dinner. I hope I haven't caused you any anxiety!"

"I confess that I'm relieved," her hostess replied. "There are several persons waiting to be presented to you, and I didn't want them to be disappointed."

She brought them up to Nomé, and the girl became again the centre of an interested circle. Excitement always stimulated her speech. She was, by this time, keyed up to a high tension by the events of the day and her words came freely. She turned from one to the other, as the discussion became general, and Madame Spiritan's quick perceptions told her, even across the room, that the company, eager for anything new and charmed by the *naïveté* and enthusiasm of the young American girl, were skilfully drawing her out. It was something more than amusement, if less than serious interest, that she read upon their faces; but any lack of sincerity was so well concealed that Nomé's limited experience in society detected no hypocrisy in it.

Madame Spiritan noticed, too, that Lord Felvex, after a word with his wife, had left the room. The spy, with her message now to deliver, could wait no longer. The word must be passed immediately, for the least delay was dangerous. She approached the group that still surrounded Nomé and awaited her chance. The girl blushed dangerously as she recognized her ally.

"One should not need to know why one saves another's life," Lady Felvex was saying.

"One should know why one refuses to save it, and that's my point," Nomé replied. "Lord Felvex saved a comrade's life with great risk to his own, and obtained a Victoria Cross for doing what was no more than his duty—or what he thought was his duty. I admire and respect him for it, surely, for it was unselfish and brave. It is not often that a man's life flowers into so

gallant an act. But none the less was it born of the fetich worship of what he calls honor or duty. Were it a real religion with him would he not use that courage on some more vital conflict than a war of aggrandizement, forced upon his country by an irresponsible ministry? Would he not attempt to save the lives of the thousands of unfortunates by thinking out his principles and acting upon them, instead of accepting this deadly doctrine of *laissez faire*? There are thousands of lives in London in more deadly peril than was that guardsman in South Africa. It seems to me that some of his duty lies there!"

"It depends upon what you mean by 'duty,' Miss Destin," Lady Felvex answered. "It seems to me that most arguments are merely quarrels over the definitions of things. No doubt if we could agree upon the definitions we would easily find ourselves reconciled in our points of view. We spend our time disputing over words, rather than upon real principles of action."

"But definitions are only the embodiments of principles," Nomé maintained. "There you are quarreling over a word yourself. I believe with you that if we could agree upon definitions we would probably agree on lines of action. But what is all philosophy but an attempt to define the universe?"

"What is your definition of the universe, Miss Destin?" asked one of the gentlemen mischievously.

Nomé, seriously absorbed in the discussion, missed the raillery in his tone, and, thinking only of the stupidity of his misunderstanding, was about to explain her point elaborately when she became aware of the general smile that rippled about her. She blushed at her own sluggish sense of humor, and Count Pribdoff came to her relief with:

"I should say that the universe was a runaway train on a line full of curves, grades and tunnels."

"I consider it a sort of giant reception where we pay exaggerated respect to a host who never appears," re-

marked Madame Spiritan, as if looking for Lord Felvex.

"I accept the amendment; your definition is better than mine," said the count, smiling.

"*It is only one of many*," was the enigmatic retort. So trivially was the sentence uttered that it passed for badinage, and the talk went lightly on, but, in speaking, Madame Spiritan looked squarely and seriously at Nomé, taking pains to catch her eye.

The message burst like a bomb in Nomé's mind. Her face again suffused with color, her hand went to her heart with the familiar gesture. Though she made an attempt to disguise her emotion and enter the conversation again, the endeavor was futile; for even had she ever been able to hold her own in the jocose channel into which the talk had turned, the summons she recognized and accepted, that bade her prepare herself for immediate action, startled her more deeply than she had anticipated. There was no escape now, no chance for procrastination and self-regard; the deed must be done! Before, she had gone through a solemn and absorbing preparation, she had had chance to reflect, plan and temporize with the danger; now, to be given the word in the midst of such gay frivolity stunned her. For a moment she could not adjust her mind to the thought that it was come at last.

Nevertheless, she aroused herself, lashing her will to action. It must be done, now! The pistol was upstairs in her chamber—it must be immediately secured. She looked about for Lord Felvex, but he was nowhere to be seen. Then she moved to her hostess's side and waited till she could have word with her alone.

"Will you pardon me if I retire now?" Nomé asked at the first chance. "I am quite fatigued, and utterly unable to talk any more."

"Certainly," Lady Felvex replied. "You do look tired. Try and get a good sleep tonight."

"I would like to speak to Lord Felvex for a few minutes first," Nomé hazarded. "I want to speak to him

about some perplexing business that came up this afternoon."

"I'm so sorry! My husband was called away to his office on important affairs, and he'll not be here till dinner-time tomorrow. He'll be at his office tomorrow morning, however, and you might see him there, if you like."

"Thank you, I may trouble him for a few moments there, as my business is quite urgent. Good night."

On her way out she met Madame Spiritan, who, in the hall, took the girl's hand and pressed it warmly.

"Be brave!" she whispered. "All depends upon you now! I am so sorry you could not come with me, but you to your part of the work and I to mine, and both for the Cause! In case I do not see you again, good-bye, dear! Let me kiss you, Nomé? There—good-bye—I leave for Berne at midnight."

Nomé went up to her room, and for a long time the light shone through the curtains of her windows.

XI

THE reception-room at the Ministry of Police was a large apartment, furnished with many tall mirrors. In these, as she waited for the interview, Nomé caught insistent reflections of herself, her slim, gracile figure gowned in dull red and ermine. These she feared to scan. Already the old distrust had come upon her, and at her second crucial moment she was again unready for action, pushing back the thought of it, the instant doing of it, the how of it, the strict alertness of eye and finger that should have absorbed her while she watched for the first pregnant chance to strike swift and hard. The long suspense had done its work of deterioration in her will and brain. She had so long and so often been put off that her heart was cold now, not hot with the fire of enthusiasm. What she had to do was to be accomplished now only by the resolute holding of her mind to its task. There was no buoyancy in her spirit, no

martyr's vision of attainment—all that was left in her soul was a sense of the inevitability of the sacrifice, and herself an almost passive instrument in the hands of Fate. The fearful approach of action paralyzed her; she acted mechanically, the prey of little tormenting thoughts, whims and fancies. Every impulse was trivial; her mind reeled.

She walked to the window to escape the disconcerting images of herself, and, looking absent-mindedly across the street, she was surprised and puzzled to see Ospovat approaching the opposite corner. What did it mean? He had escaped, then, from that dreadful scene in the cellar, of which she had heard only the morning's rumors. His head was bandaged—he had been wounded. But why was he here, perpetually following her about like a spaniel? Did he, at last, doubt her; he, the one person who had fed her with constant flattering trust? Or—and the thought alarmed her—was he present to make sure that the work was done, in case she should fail? Perhaps Mangus, still uncertain of her, had sent him to reinforce her attempt. The thought spurred her to anger, and she began to lose some of her self-consciousness. She would show them how a woman could die!

A footman entered, came up to her and announced that the minister was ready to receive her. She followed him a little way down the wide hall, opening a door into Lord Felvex's office. He was there waiting, with his back to a marble fireplace, and came forward with outstretched hand.

She took a step backward and avoided his greeting.

"Wait!" she exclaimed hoarsely; her own voice seemed dreadful to her. "What I have to say will not take long, and I prefer to stand."

He looked at her calmly, and she could not help admiring his equanimity. He was sure of himself—but he was a man. Were all men sure? Even Ospovat, whom she had always counted her inferior, he was sure, too; he was a man—and she had to oppose this man's

strength with her woman's weakness, as Mangus had said. These thoughts raced through her mind.

"What can I do for you, Nomé?" said the minister, his eyes never leaving her, watching her slightest movement. He had drawn gradually nearer.

She must be believed in, whatever happened. Her soul demanded the explanation of her hypocrisy. She would tell him, in few words, and then—

"I have come to tell you what I am," she began. "Your kindness has been killing me by inches, and I can't bear to play a false part before you any longer. It is true I saved your life, but you owe me nothing—nothing! I have been made the victim of a romantic episode, a popular, melodramatic heroine, and, after all had happened, I have become your friend again! Why? Because I set out to kill you! Because I tried and failed."

She paused a moment, scarcely daring to look at him. But she saw no surprise in his face, no shock of horror, only a pity that she revolted at. She wondered at his self-control, he, who was so soon to die, while she was unsteady, gasping. "I tried to kill you!" she repeated querulously, disappointed that her words caused no sensation.

"I know it," the minister replied.

"You knew it? How?"

"I have known about it for some time. I have suspected it for a longer time still."

"Thank God for that!" she cried. "Whatever I am, I would not be thought a hypocrite. Yet you made friends with me?"

"Why not? You saved my life, after all." He smiled.

"Don't! don't!" she wailed. "Why did I permit myself to speak to you here? Why do I go on talking now? There's self, self, self! Oh, I have almost spent my force in words now—I know what Mangus meant! What have I to do with pride? Why can't I act?" She spoke in an agony of weakness and shame.

"Nomé dear," he began, and then caught a sudden closing of her lips, a

change in her mood. He saw that something had turned in her, rousing her to a despairing resolve.

He stretched out his hand. "Don't, Nomé!" he commanded.

Her face was convulsed, but she paused. "What do you mean?" she said lamely. Even then, for her honor, for her Cause, she knew that she could not withdraw her hand from her muff and fire.

"You have a revolver there," he said, speaking in a measured, deliberate tone. "You have come to shoot me today, as you went before. I know everything, all your secret, and I have been expecting this. But you will not do it. You are too much of a woman, your heart is too true. You cannot believe that a human life must be taken to prove a wild, impossible theory. You have lived in a world of sentiment, and you have consorted with visions. But you are no visionist. You have found the one real truth, your love for me—our love for each other. You have not the courage to deny this one great thing; you have not the courage to shoot me. You are afraid of me, for you know that I am right. If you can, then shoot me now!"

He spoke as if hypnotizing her, almost brutally compelling her will. She yielded, as the sleeper yields, to his will, and could not draw her revolver. She felt her last drop of resolution ebb away. Yet the situation was so hackneyed, so patently melodramatic, that she loathed herself for having allowed it to become possible, for succumbing to a test so threadbare. Was she to be defeated by such claptrap means? His assurance appalled her—he was all man and she all woman, his inferior. She tasted the dregs of bitterest mortification.

Then, her glance wavering, her brain reeling under the strain, she hurried from the room, to shut out the sight of him.

Ospovat was coming up the stairs, white-faced, staring, his mouth open with excitement. She dared not face him, and staggered into the reception-room, sickening at thought of her in-

decision. Ospovat ran up to her, and found her in a flood of tears.

"Did you do it?" he cried. "I didn't hear the shot! Is he dead? Nomé, Nomé, tell me!" Then, as she refused to answer, his heart broke at the thought of her cowardice.

"My God, Nomé! You haven't failed *again*, have you? Tell me, Nomé! Ah, never mind, my love! Quick, give me the pistol—I shall save you this time!"

Without stopping for her protest, he wrenched the revolver from her hand, and ran down the hall. Nomé put her hands to her eyes. The next instant two muffled shots rang out. Then almost immediately Ospovat came back, slammed the doors of the reception-room shut, and ran to kneel at her side. He forced the pistol into her trembling hand.

All his excitement was gone now, and though he spoke quickly through his teeth, he was unnaturally deliberate. His voice was as tender and soothing as a mother's to her child.

"It is done, Nomé—he is killed at last! I have saved your honor! No one will know that you didn't do it. No one saw me. I will tell them that you shot him. Quick, now—they are coming! Don't you understand? I have saved you—you shall have all the glory! Take the pistol, for God's sake, and say that you did it!"

There were cries from below, and footsteps were heard running down the hall. Nomé turned deathly pale and ill. Must it always end this way, the man strong and determined, the woman weak and undecided? Little Ospovat had beaten her at the end. Why could she not have risen to his height?

No—but one thing she could do! Ospovat's courage had illumined her at last. It would do no good, but it would be what a man would do, at least. She put the revolver quickly, passionately, to her heart and fired.

Several men rushed into the room and sprang furiously at the little Russian Jew, who was now quivering with horror. With a terrible effort he

withdrew his eyes from Nomé's bleeding form upon the floor, and looked haggardly up at them.

Then he gave her back her honor, and his share in the glory of the Cause she had betrayed.

"Yes, take me, take me!" he said.

"But she shot him!—this girl here, Nomé Destin, she shot him, and now she has shot herself as well. *She did it!* Do you understand? I only helped. It was her work. She is the heroine of the Cause! She was wonderful!"



THEIR ONE HARMONY

"AND did they never agree?"
"Yes, finally—to get a divorce."



HISTORY AND FASHION

THE man whose wife and three daughters always dressed in the newest style was settling the usual monthly bills.

"History may repeat itself," he observed, with something like a weary lift to his eyebrows, "but Fashion never does."



NOT YET!

THE SON—Can't you let me have that hundred dollars, *pater*? You once said that you would share your last cent with your children.

THE FATHER—Yes, but I haven't got to my last cent yet.

AN INQUIRY

SHE—But I couldn't make her listen to me.

HER HUSBAND—Really? How did she get out of it?

A SONG FOR MAY

By Maurice Francis Egan

C HAMPAGNE is well for firewood time,
And Burgundy when high winds blow,
And Bourbon with a dash of lime
Is good enough for days of snow;
But May wine, made in Germany,
Is, lovely May, the drink for thee!

The symphony of April rain
Is sounding from the roof and hill,
And through the shining window-pane
We see the wild azaleas fill
With freshened life—with wine as sweet—
As sweet as May—and May they greet!

Think not—oh, joy!—of winters past;
Think not—delight!—of autumn's gloom;
“Old Time away his cloak has cast,”
A doublet gay of peachy bloom
He wears, with fairy-stitched hose,
Embossed with every bud that glows.

There is a daisy in his cap,
Like yellow tulips is his hair,
Of dandelion shines the strap
That holds the bugle he doth wear;
Old Time is young; he laughs, he cheers,
He sings of hope, of happy years!

There's amber in the buttercup
Which every bird that likes may sip,
And many a yunker takes a sup
Of May wine, fragrant o' the slip
Of that green herb of German land
Which warms the heart and nerves the hand.

So, sack and sherry put away,
And let the cobwebs weave and cling
To port and Bordeaux: bright Tokay
Shall sparkle best in early spring;
For the herb-brew of Germany
Is, lovely May, the drink for thee!

AFTER VICTORY

GRANT me strength to face my conquered;
 Teach me the smile of pride;
 Give me patient endurance
 For my deeds that are glorified;
 But after the splendor sweeps past,
 One little hour to abide
 Alone and in darkness at last,
 With the simple joys that have died.

FLORENCE WILKINSON.



A REAL HUMAN PLAY

ONCE upon a time there was a king who was very much interested in human nature. So intense was his curiosity upon the subject that every means was employed by his subjects to gratify it.

Any kind of an entertainment that threw any light upon the subject of human nature was sure to excite the king's interest.

One day a theatrical manager, who was an original genius, presented himself at court.

"Your majesty," he said, "with your permission I will entertain you with my latest production, which aims to portray all the various types of man."

"Delighted," said the king.

The curtain rose promptly, and the first actor came forward.

"I am a real, genuine, selfish man," said he. "I care for nobody but myself. My own interest is the main thing with me."

He retired, and another man came forward.

"I am wicked," said the second man. "I glory in crime. I like to kill. I am naturally cruel."

He was in turn succeeded by a third man.

"I am," said the third man, "honest, or at least I try to be. I love my neighbor and treat him as well as I know how."

He gave place to a fourth actor, who, without hesitation, said:

"I am a natural-born liar. I deceive when I can and never tell the truth when I can avoid it."

Said the fifth actor: "I am just plain mean. I am naturally so and I can't help it."

Said the sixth actor: "I am generous. I just love to do good to others."

By this time the king was beginning to yawn. He raised his hand to stop the performance and summoned the theatrical manager before him.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "this is the most tiresome thing I have ever seen. The idea of your getting together so many actors just to have them come out and tell what they are. What's the point of this play, anyway?"

"Why, that's the point," said the manager. "The entire company consists of only one man, with changes of costume."

TOM MASSON.

THE LION OF LYNDON

By A. Van Dwight

LITTLE Mrs. Mowbray Truxton was sitting on the clubhouse veranda, uttering literary enthusiasms in her absurdly disproportionate voice, for the benefit of a small but admiring audience.

"It's alive," she was saying. "It smells of earth—such strength, color—such biting, stinging——"

"May I ask what kind of cheese you're talking about?" interrupted a tall young man in tennis flannels, appearing suddenly in the doorway.

"Billy," said Mrs. Truxton with some asperity, "you have always made the most of a brother's privilege to be disagreeable to his sister, but now you are getting positively vulgar."

"I don't want to be vulgar," said Billy with humble pathos, "but I really hoped it might be cheese, you know, for I'm horribly hungry. Yes, thanks, a little tea, if you please, Miss Newbury, and six or eight large muffins."

"Was my sister speaking of the immortal Tatterly, by any chance, Miss Weston?" Billy resumed, as he neared the end of his first muffin. He addressed the quiet girl who was staying with the Newburys, as the person most likely to respond.

"When you came," answered the quiet girl, without looking up from her embroidery, "we were talking about 'When the Fates Change Horses,' by —by—who was it by, Mrs. Truxton?"

"McTurk," said Mrs. Truxton. "Please don't encourage Billy, Miss Weston; it only makes him worse."

"What, another?" groaned Billy, his head in his hands. "Has Tatterly a rival? Strange how my sister likes to have her intellectual emotions con-

stantly stirred with a long-handled spoon, while I——"

"Billy," said his sister coldly, "don't you ever remind yourself of that young man in 'The Admirable Crichton' who was always trying to make epigrams and who had to be taken out every little while to have cold water poured on his head?"

"No, Janet, when I remind myself to pour anything on anybody's head, it shall be coals of fire. I shall begin at once and invite you all to play tennis with me. I have even gone so far as to hunt up a specially long-handled racquet for you, Janet, with which you may be able to get a ball up over the net without having to lob—provided you jump up, of course."

"No, run along. No one wants to play with you." Mrs. Truxton was really incensed by this last jibe directed at her tenderest point. Mrs. Mowbray Truxton was a very small woman indeed, but she had been described, perhaps more accurately, as a miniature giantess. In her own mind she considered herself to be very much on the grand scale, and she carefully conformed to that scale in every possible particular. Her notes were inscribed in a huge, inky, masculine character, carefully cultivated and decidedly impressive when executed with a quill on rough paper. She had not been displeased to hear that her admirers described her conversation as "terse—rugged—epigrammatic." She had taken to herself a six-foot husband and a dog as big as a small pony. The Truxton horses were enormous and their break quite the tallest in the colony. It was even characteristic of

Janet Truxton that she should have chosen Tatterly for her literary passion—not that most people don't admire Tatterly nowadays.

"Perhaps some day she'll be sorry she wasn't kinder to her little brother," sighed Billy. "I'm dining out tonight, and I think I'm coming down with epizootic."

"I believe you dine out five nights a week regularly all summer," said Euphemia Newbury, disregarding the symptoms. "What it is to be a detached bachelor!"

"In Lyndon we are driven by a cruel necessity to detach them from their nurses and ask them to dinner at an almost criminally early age," said Mrs. Truxton, glancing spitefully at the youthful Billy.

"Well," Euphemia Newbury continued, "it's mighty different being a detached spinster, I can tell you. We only get asked to lunches. This colony is so neatly paired off and married, two and two, that there are only eight or ten possible dinner combinations. If anyone does import an extra man from outside, there is sure to be an extra girl stopping with somebody else. And so it goes——"

"And yet," said Billy, interrupting again, "you all scorned Mrs. Tommy Braithwaite's nice, philanthropic plan for asking husbands separate from wives and vice versa."

"Humph! We all knew Dolly Braithwaite too well to believe that we'd ever see the vice-versa part of it," said his sister skeptically. "But it really is ghastly," Mrs. Truxton went on, "to meet precisely the same people over and over and to know exactly whom one is going to meet beforehand. I am positively hungry for someone new and really interesting to take me in to dinner."

"Yes," said Euphemia Newbury, "that is the trouble with an isolated little colony like this. When any one of us has by any chance secured an interesting man, he always toots it from the housetop, and as the Braithwaites haven't done any tooting, I'm afraid there is small hope for you to-morrow night, Janet."

"You see, Miss Weston," said Billy to the quiet girl, who had put down her embroidery to listen, "we only get one or two very tame lions a year up here, and those are apt to be sulky and disappointing. When the Braithwaites had the distinguished authoress of 'A Flat in Florence'——"

"Woman was a fool—book was idiotic!" Mrs. Truxton interjected hoarsely.

"Well, we supposed she was going to be brilliant, anyhow," Billy continued. "And the Braithwaites made a point of getting Polton to meet her, because he's considered to be clever. Well, Polton told me afterward, and swore to it, that she never said a word to him during the entire dinner, until along toward the ice she happened to look around and see a big Grueby vase in the corner, and then all she said was, 'Good jug!'"

The quiet girl's eyes laughed appreciatingly. They were such nice, understanding gray eyes. It was a pity that embroidery should engross so much of their attention. Even now she showed signs of taking it up again, and to avert such a catastrophe Billy hastened on to another anecdote.

"And the Cuthbert-Joneses had an Austrian baron who asked Janet if it were possible she believed in spontaneous evolution, when, in trying to explain our Colonial Dames to him, she mentioned that probably the Painted Lady hadn't a grandfather."

"Please tell me, who is the Painted Lady?" asked the quiet girl. Billy mentally patted himself on the back as he watched her fold the bit of linen about the tiny hoop and stow it away in a tinier bag.

"Why, the Painted Lady," answered Euphemia Newbury, "is the accident that will happen in the best regulated of colonies. Her name is Mirabel—Mrs. Mirabel—and she took that cottage over there behind the club last spring. She wears a yellow wig and a stunning complexion and looks altogether as though she had been nourished exclusively on cold bottles and hot

birds. A queer-looking little old woman lives with her—her mother, I believe. But if you want to see her, here she comes in all her glory, or some of it."

Coming up the poplar-shaded road at the ponderous dog-trot of a fat white pony was a low, comfortable basket phaëton. It was shaded by a top trimmed with a luxuriant blond fringe which seemed to harmonize admirably with the luxuriant blond lady who reclined beneath it and permitted the reins to hang loose on the pony's broad back. Mrs. Mirabel seemed to be lost in a pleasant reverie, and quite oblivious of the concentrated attention of the club veranda.

Her famous complexion was shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, but an occasional glint suggested the presence of diamonds in her ears. The intervening tennis courts might have blurred one's impression of another woman, but Mrs. Mirabel seemed clearly visible at that distance.

The impression she made upon her observers was decided, and one that, from Lyndon's point of view at any rate, seemed more than to justify Lyndon's rejection of her.

Even that freckled, waddling pony would surely have found difficulty in making an equine friend among the smart cobs and high-stepping, well-groomed hackneys of the colony. If Mrs. Mirabel had been seeking her kind in coming among their equally smart and well-groomed masters, truly she had been misguided.

"That's the way she spends most of her time," commented Euphemia Newbury, as the phaëton disappeared from their view. "Jogging around the wood roads alone, except once in awhile when some queer-looking man comes down for over Sunday."

"Can't imagine what the woman ever thought she wanted to come here for," declared Mrs. Mowbray Truxton.

"Perhaps she thought that because the place is so small we would have to call on her," suggested Euphemia Newbury.

"Has none of you ever met her?" asked the quiet girl.

"Yes, I have," said Euphemia. "One time last spring I turned my ankle by falling off a fence getting dogwood. It hurt awfully, and I really couldn't refuse when the Painted Lady happened along and offered to drive me home. She was very sympathetic, and when she put me down she asked me to come and see her."

"And did you go?" asked the quiet girl.

"No," answered Euphemia. "I might have, but a little while after that I met her in the post-office and she said, 'When are you coming to see me, my dear?' Of course, when a woman tries to force herself on you like that, and calls you 'my dear' into the bargain—why, it's too much."

Euphemia Newbury came from Boston, and would have had small use for endearments, even from her friends, had they been inclined to such soft dalliance.

"We should really be grateful to her," said Billy, "for lending a much needed spice to our social existence, by providing us with someone to be nasty to—someone to exclude and thereby demonstrate our exclusiveness. Hitherto, we have lacked the charm of *chiaroscuro*—Oh, Jones!" Billy made a megaphone of his hands and hailed the first of the carriages returning from the five o'clock train from town. "Can we get in one or two sets before dinner?"

"Sure," answered the genial voice of Mr. Cuthbert-Jones, clear and sharp on the crisp evening air, as he wheeled his horse into the lane. In another moment he had jumped from his red-wheeled break and was saying: "Oh, by the way, Mrs. Truxton, I fancy the Braithwaites have a nice little surprise for you tomorrow night. Guess who was on the train coming out?"

"Tatterly," suggested Billy.

"Well, how on earth did you know, Billy?" said Mr. Cuthbert-Jones, disappointed of his sensation.

Billy didn't get a chance to say that he hadn't known.

"You don't mean it, really, do you?" the Newburys shrieked in chorus.

"But however did the Braithwaites get him?" gasped Mrs. Truxton when she had recovered enough breath. "They aren't a bit his sort, and he is such a tremendous lion!"

"Just what I thought myself. But I'm not absolutely certain they have got him," admitted Mr. Cuthbert-Jones. "You see, I only spotted them on the station platform, and, of course, I recognized Tatterly right away from the magazine pictures. I'd have hung around to make sure whose trap he got into, but my mare was in one of her retiring moods and kept cramping me into old Mrs. Polton until I heard her telling her coachman what she thought of me, and then I realized it was time to move on. Here comes Braithwaite now. By Jove! he's alone! Maybe Mrs. Tommy has picked up Tatterly for a drive."

Mrs. Mowbray Truxton flew down the steps to meet the approaching mail-cart. "Oh, Mr. Braithwaite," she cried, "is it really true that you have the great Mr. Tatterly stopping with you? And you've asked us to meet him! How dear of you!"

"Awfully sorry to disappoint you, Mrs. Truxton," said Tommy Braithwaite, handing the reins to his groom and looking down with a curious smile at the breathless little woman; "but I really must admit that I haven't. Miss Newbury, won't you please give me some rum with a little tea in it, *à la Russe*?"

"Don't dally and pause for refreshment. You don't know what this means to us, man," said Billy tragically.

"Well," said Braithwaite, "you see, I had a slight smoking-room acquaintance with Tatterly once, goin' across, and I presumed on that to speak to him when I saw him on the train to-

night. He was very nice and civil—talked a lot, told me he was coming out for the week-end with a friend—a woman he'd known years ago in Australia and hadn't seen since. She was by all odds the cleverest woman he ever knew, he said—masculine strength and breadth of view combined with feminine intuition, and a whole lot more stuff like that. Do give me a chance to get a little nourishment, you slave-drivers!"

"No, no!" howled Billy indignantly. "Do you think we are going to sit here and watch you eat when there may be a lion around loose in Lyndon, for all we know! Go on, now; you'd got as far as feminine intuition."

"Well, it seems that this friend of Tatterly's has written a bang-up book—somethin' about changin' horses, I think he said."

"Not McTurk!" Mrs. Truxton exclaimed. "McTurk a woman!"

"Yes, yes. That's it; McTurk. Well, then, this genius has picked out a quiet little hole in the country, where she can think up another, with no one to bother her.

"By and bye he asked me where I was gettin' off. I told him Lyndon. 'Why,' he said, 'then you must know her——'"

Here Mr. Braithwaite, having clearly indicated the imminence of his climax, interrupted himself somewhat ostentatiously with a muffin and leaned back in his chair to enjoy the effect upon his audience. But the moment for pause was ill-chosen, for before the muffin could be swallowed, fate had intervened and taken the climax forever out of Mr. Tommy Braithwaite's keeping.

Once more the fat pony and the basket phaëton were coming down the road. The blond lady was still unmindful of the scrutiny of Lyndon, but this time she was listening to the eager speech of a man sitting beside her.

Even across the tennis courts the man was unmistakable.



A REMINISCENTIAL DINNER

By John O'Keefe

YES, down these stairs. Why, how they creak!
But recollect, my dear,
'Twas seven years ago this week
That we had dinner here.
Time's feet have worn the planking thin,
But it is also true,
Concerning thinness, he has been
Quite generous to you.

The same old basement! No, I see
It's wider. Still, 'tis clear
The years have broadened you and me
Proportionately, dear.
The same old pictures on the wall;
The vintners' signs the same;
Indeed, I fancy I recall
The flyspecks on the frame.

We'll take the same old table, dear.
Let's see—the left-hand row.
No, no, not there! The fourth one—here!
I think I ought to know.
Oh, well, if you insist, the third.
Your memory may be right,
Considering, dearest, what occurred
Upon that other night.

The same old chairs! Be careful, sweet;
You know you shook the stairs,
And these were never strong of seat,
These spindle-leggèd chairs.
The same old coat-hooks! . . . Waiter, here!
What, you? My faith, 'tis so!
The same good Frederic, my dear,
Of seven years ago.

But no, his hair is gray, alas!
Ah, dearest, it is thus
We see within another's glass
How time has dealt with us.
What? Angry, dear? I'm sure I meant
No reference to you.
Believe me, it is evident
Your hair's as good as new.

The same old— Nay! remembrance may
Be just a bit too bright—
'Tis not the tablecloth today
We had that other night.
The menu, please. Well, as I live,
The same old bill, I think:
Yes, fifty cents—and still they give
The same empurpled ink.

The soup's the same, and yet its taste
Is not exactly right.
Some folk atone for growth in waist
With loss of appetite.
There, there! It's really quite absurd
The way you take offense.
I meant myself; I've not referred
To *your* circumference!

What have they in the line of fish,
Maturer tastes to pique?
Why, dear, it is the selfsame dish
That led me on to speak.
"Two soles" my order was, and ere
The platter had been brought,
We both were blushing aware
Of but a single thought.

The entrée? Chicken. Sweetheart mine,
Recall the ardor quick
With which I hastened to resign
The choicer bits of chick.
Less edible the bony things
With which I had to do,
But, as I ate those chicken wings,
My heart flew out to you!

'Twas then I stammered, "Will you, dear?"
'Twas then you whispered, "Yes."
What's that? 'Twas when dessert was here?
Oh, hang it all! I guess
I know the hour I made secure
My wedlock fetters hard;
Madam, I'm absolutely sure
The "roast" came afterward!

Now, there you go! Indeed, I might
Have known this little feast
Would pall upon an appetite
Substantially increased.
Waiter, the bill! Don't bring the cheese:
Dessert makes no appeals.
Come, Mrs. Smith! I'm through with these
Reminiscent meals.

A MOCK SUN

By James Huncker

THE grating of the carriage wheels awoke her from the dream which had lightly brushed away the night and the vision of the Arc de Triomphe—looming into the mystery of sky and stars, its monumental flanks sprawling across the Place de l'Etoile. She heard her name called by Mrs. Sheldam as their coachman guided his horses through the gateway of the Princesse de Lancovani's palace.

"Now, Ermentrude! Wake up, dear; we are there," said Mrs. Sheldam in her kind, drawling tones. Mr. Sheldam sighed and threw away the unlighted cigar he had bitten during the ride along the Champs Elysées. Whatever the evening meant for his wife and niece he saw little entertainment in store for himself; he did not speak French very well, he disliked music and "tall talk"; altogether he wished himself at the Grand Hôtel, where he would be sure to meet some jolly Americans. Their carriage had halted in front of a spacious marble stairway, lined on either side with palms, and though it was a June night the glass doors were closed.

Ermentrude's heart was in her throat, not because of the splendor, which she was accustomed to—but it was to be her first meeting with a noble dame, whose name was historic, at whose feet the poets of the Second Empire had prostrated themselves, passionately plucking their lyres; the friend of Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, of Manet, Degas, Monet; the new school—this wonderful old woman knew them all, from de Goncourt and Flaubert to Daudet and de Maupassant.

Had she not, Ermentrude remembered as she divested herself of her cloak, sent a famous romancer out of the house because he spoke slightly of the Pope! Had she not cut the emperor dead when she saw him with a lady not his empress! What a night this would be in the American girl's orderly existence! And *he* was to be there, he had promised the princess.

Her heart was overflowing when she was graciously received by the great lady who stood in the centre of a group at the back of the drawing-room—a lofty apartment in white and gold, the panels painted by Baudry, the furniture purest Empire. She noted the height and majestic bearing of this cousin of kings, noted the aquiline nose drooped over a contracted mouth—which could assume most winning curves, withal shaded by suspicious down, that echoed in hue her inky eyebrows. The eyes of the princess were small and green and her glance penetrating. Her white hair rolled imperially off her high, narrow forehead.

Ermentrude bore herself with the utmost composure. She adored the Old World, adored genius, but after all she was an Adams of New Hampshire, her sister the wife of a former ambassador. It was more curiosity than *gaucherie* that prompted her to hold the hand offered her and scrutinize the features as if to evoke from the significant, etched wrinkles the tremendous past of this hostess. The princess was pleased.

"Ah, Miss Adams," she said in idiomatic English, "you have candid eyes. You make me feel like telling stories when you gaze at me so appeal-

ingly. Don't be shocked"—the girl had colored—"perhaps I shall, after awhile."

Mr. Sheldam had slipped into a corner behind a very broad table and under the shaded lamps examined some engravings. Mrs. Sheldam talked in hesitating French to the Marquis de Potachre, an old fellow of venerable and burlesque appearance. His fierce little white mustaches were curled ceilingward, but his voice was as timid as honey. He flourished his wizened hand toward Miss Adams.

"Charming! Delightful! She has something English in her *insouciant* pose, and is wholly American in her cerebral quality. And what coloring, what gorgeous brown hair! What a race, madame, is yours!"

Mrs. Sheldam began to explain that the Adams stock was famous, but the marquis did not heed her. He peered at her niece through a gold-rimmed monocle. The princess had left the group near the table and with two young men slowly moved down the salon. Miss Adams was immediately surrounded by some antiquated gentlemen wearing orders, who paid her compliments in the manner of the eighteenth century. She answered them with composure, for she was sure of her French, sure of herself—the princess had not annihilated her. Her aunt, accompanied by the marquis, crossed to her and the old nobleman amused her with his saturnine remarks.

"Time was," he said, "when one met here the cream of Parisian wit and fashion: the great Flaubert, a noisy fellow at times, I vow; Dumas fils, Cabanel, Gérôme, Duran, ever-winning Carolus—ah, what men! Now we get Polish pianists, crazy Belgians, anarchistic poets and neo-impressionists. I have warned the princess again and again."

"Bécasse!" interrupted the lady herself. "M. Rajewski has consented to play a Chopin nocturne. And here are my two painters, Miss Adams—Messieurs Bla and Maugre. They hate each other like the Jesuits and

Jansenists of the good old days of Pascal."

"She likes to display her learning," grumbled the marquis to Mrs. Sheldam. "That younger man, Bla, swears by divided tones; his neighbor, Maugre, paints in dots. One is always to be recognized a half-mile away by his vibrating waterscapes—he calls them Symphonies of the Wet; the other goes in for turkeys in the grass, fowls that are cobalt-blue daubs, with grass a scarlet. It's awful on the optic nerves. *Pointillisme*, Maugre names his stuff. Now, give me Corot——"

"Hush, hush!" came in energetic sibilants from the princess, who rapped with her Japanese walking-stick for silence. Mr. Sheldam woke up and fumbled the pictures as Rajewski, slowly bending his gold-dust aureole until it almost grazed the keyboard, began with deliberate accents a nocturne. Miss Adams knew his playing well, but its poetry was not for her this evening; rather did the veiled tones of the instrument form a misty background to the human tableau. So Chopin must have woven his magic last century, and in a salon like this—the wax candles burning with majestic steadiness in the sculptured sconces, the huge fireplace, monumental in design, with its dull brass garnishing; the subdued richness of the decoration into which fitted, as figures in a frame, the various guests. Even the waxed floor seemed to take on new reverberations as the pianoforte sounded the sweet despair of the Pole. To her dismay Ermentrude caught herself drifting away from the moment's hazy charm to thoughts of her poet. It annoyed her, she sharply reminded herself, that she could not absolutely saturate herself with the music and the manifold souvenirs of the old *hôtel*; perhaps this may have been the spell of Rajewski's playing. . . .

The music ceased. A dry voice whispered in her ear:

"Great artist, that chap Rajewski. Had to leave Russia once because he wouldn't play the Russian national

hymn for the Czar. Bless me, but he was almost sent to Siberia—and in irons, too. Told me here in this very room that he was much frightened. They lighted fires in Poland to honor his patriotism. He acknowledged that *he* would have played twenty national hymns, but he couldn't remember the Russian one, or never knew it—anyhow, he was christened a patriot, and all by a slip of the memory. Now, that's luck, isn't it?"

She began to dislike this cynical old man with his depreciating tales of genius. She knew that her idols often tottered on clay feet, but she hated to be reminded of that disagreeable reality. She went to M. Rajewski and thanked him prettily in her cool, new voice, and again the princess nodded approval.

"She is *chic*, your little girl," she confided in her deep tones to Mrs. Sheldam, whose tired New England face almost beamed at the compliment.

"We were in Hamburg at the Zoological Garden; I always go to see animals," declaimed the princess in the midst of a thick silence. "For you know, my friends, one studies humanity there in the raw. Well, I dragged our party to the large monkey cage, and we enjoyed ourselves—immensely! And what do you think we saw! A genuine novelty. Some mischievous sailor had given an overgrown ape a mirror, and the poor wretch spent its time staring at its image, neglecting its food and snarling at its companions. The beast would catch the reflection of another ape in the glass and quickly bound to a more remote perch. The keeper told me that for a week his charge had barely eaten. It slept with the mirror held tightly in its paws. Now, what did the mirror mean to the animal! I believe"—here she became very vivacious—"I really believe that it was developing self-consciousness, and in time it would become human. On our way back from Heligoland, where we were entertained on the emperor's yacht at the naval manœuvres, we paid another visit to our monkey house. The poor, misguided brute had

died of starvation. It had become so vain, so egotistical, so superior that it refused food and wasted away in a corner, gazing at itself, a hairy Narcissus, or rather the perfect type of your modern Superman, who contemplates his *ego* until his brain sickens, and he dies quite mad."

Everyone laughed. Mrs. Sheldam wondered what a Superman was, and Ermentrude felt annoyed. Zarathustra was another of her gods, and this brusquely related anecdote did not seem to her very *spirituelle*. But she had not formulated an answer when she heard a name announced, a name that set her heart beating. At last! The poet had kept his word. She was to meet in the flesh the man whose too few books were her Bibles of art, of philosophy, of all that stood for aspiration toward a lovely ideal in a dull, matter-of-fact world.

"Now," said the princess, as if smiling at some hidden joke, "now you will meet *my* Superman." And she led the young American girl to Octave Kéroulan and his wife, and, after greeting them in her masculine manner, she burst forth:

"Dear poet! Here is one of your adorers from over-seas! Guard your husband well, Madame Lys."

So he was married! Well, that was not such a shocking fact. Nor was Madame Kéroulan either—a very tall, slim, English-looking blond who dressed modishly and evidently knew that she was the wife of a famous man. Ermentrude found her insipid; she had studied her face first before comparing the mental photograph of the poet with the original. Nor did she feel, with unconscious sex rivalry, any sense of inferiority to the wife of her admired one. He was nearly forty, but he looked older; gray hairs tinged his finely modeled head. His face was shaven, and with the bulging brow and full jaw he was more of the German or Belgian than French. Black hair thrown off his broad forehead accented this resemblance; a composer rather than a prose-poet and dramatist, was the rapid verdict of Ermentrude. She was

not disappointed, though she had expected a more fragile type. The weaver of moonshine, of mystic phrases, of sweet gestures and veiled sonorities should not have worn the guise of one who ate three meals a day and slept soundly after his mellow incantations. Yet she was not—inheriting, as she did, a modicum of sense from her father—disappointed.

The conversation did not move more briskly with the entrance of the Kéroulans. The marquis sullenly gossiped with Mr. Sheldam; the princess withdrew herself to the far end of the room with her two painters. Rajewski was going to a *soirée*, he informed them, where he would play before a new picture by Carrière, as it was slowly undraped; no one less in rank than a duchess would be present! A little stiffly, Ermentrude Adams assured the Kéroulans of her pleasure in meeting them. The poet took it as a matter of course, simply, without a suspicion of posed grandeur. Ermentrude saw this with satisfaction. If he had clay feet—and he must have them; all men do—at least he wore his genius with a sense of its responsibility. She meekly folded her hands and leaned back, awaiting the precious moment when the oracle would speak, when this modern magician of art would display his cunning. But he was fatuously commonplace in his remarks.

"I have often told Madame Kéroulan that my successes in Europe do not appeal to me as those in far-away America. Dear America—how it must enjoy a breath of real literature!"

Mrs. Sheldam sat up primly and Ermentrude was vastly amused. With a flash of fun she replied:

"Yes, America does, M. Kéroulan. We have so many Europeans over there now that our standard has fallen off from the days of Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier and Whitman. And didn't America give Europe Poe?" She knew that this boast had the ring of the amateur, but it pleased her to see how it startled him.

"America is the Great Bribe," he

pursued. "You have no artists in New York."

"Nor have we New Yorkers," the girl retorted. "The original writing natives live in Europe."

He looked puzzled, but did not stop. "You have depressed literature to the point of publication," he solemnly asserted. This was too much and she laughed in mockery. Husband and wife joined her, while Mrs. Sheldam trembled at the audacity of her niece—whose irony was as much lost on her as it was on the poet.

"But *you* publish plays and books, do you not?" Ermentrude naïvely asked.

Madame Kéroulan interposed in icy tones:

"Mademoiselle Adams misunderstands. Monsieur Kéroulan is the Grand Disdainer. Like his bosom friend, M. Mallarmé, he cares little for the philistine public——"

He interrupted her: "Lys, dear friend, you must not bore Miss Adams with my theories of art and life. *She* has read me——"

Ermentrude gave him a grateful glance. He seemed, despite his self-consciousness, a great man—how great she could not exactly define. His eyes—two black diamonds full of golden reflections, the eyes of a conqueror, a seer—began to burn little bright spots into her consciousness, and, selfishly, she admitted, she wished the two women would go away and leave her to interrogate her idol in peace. There were so many things to ask him, so many difficult passages in "The Golden Glaze" and "Hesitations," above all in that great dramatic poem, "The Voices," which she had witnessed in Paris, with its mystic atmosphere of pity and terror. She would never forget her complex feelings as, at a Paris theatre, she saw slowly file before her in a Dream-Masque the wraith-like figures of the poet, their voices their only corporeal gift. Picture had dissolved into picture, and in the vapors of these crooning enchantments she heard voices of various timbres enunciating in monosyllables the wis-

dom of the ages, the poetry of the future. This play was, for her and for Paris, too, the last word in dramatic art, the supreme *nuance* of beauty. Everything had been accomplished: Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Sardou; yet here was a new evocation, a fresh peep at untrodden paths. In bliss that almost dissolved her being the emotional American girl reached her hotel, where she tried to sleep. When her aunt told her of the invitation tendered by the princess, a rare one socially, she was in the ninth heaven of the Swedenborgians. Any place to meet Octave Kéroulan!

And now he sat near her, signaling, she knew, her sympathies, and as the fates would have it two dragons, her aunt and his wife, guarded the gateway to the precious garden of his imagination. She could have cried aloud her chagrin. Such an inestimable treasure was genius that to see it under lock and key invited indignation. The time was running on and her great man had said nothing. He could, if he wished, give her a million extraordinary glimpses of the earth and the air and the waters below them, for his eyes were mirrors of his marvelous and many-colored soul; but what chance had he with a conjugal iceberg on one side, a cloud of smoke—poor Aunt Sheldam—on the other! She felt in her fine, rhapsodic way like a young priestess before the altar, ready to touch with a live coal the lips of the gods, but withheld by a malignant power. For the first time in her life Ermentrude Adams, delicately nurtured in a social hothouse, realized in wrath the major tyranny of caste.

The evening wore away. Mrs. Sheldam aroused her husband as she cast a horrified glance at the classic prints he had been studying. The princess dismissed her two impressionists and came over to the poet. She, too plainly, did not care for his wife, and as the party broke up there was a sense of relief, though Ermentrude could not conceal her dissatisfaction. Her joy was sincere when Madame Kéroulan asked Miss Adams and her

aunt to call. It was slightly gelid, the invitation, though accepted immediately by Ermentrude. This time the *convenances* could look out for themselves; she would not go back to America without an interview. The princess raised her hand mockingly.

"What, I go to one of your conferences! Not I, *cher poète*. Keep your mysteries for your youthful disciples." She looked at Ermentrude, who did not lower her eyes—she was triumphant now. Perhaps *he* might say something before they parted. He did not, but the princess did.

"Beware, young America, of my Superman! You remember the story of the ape with the mirror!"

Ermentrude flushed with mortification. This princess was decidedly rude at times. But she kept her temper and thanked the lady for a unique evening. Her exquisite youth and grace pleased the terrible old woman, who then varied her warning.

"Beware," she called out in comical accents as they slowly descended the naked marble staircase, "of the Sleeping Princess!"

The American girl looked over her shoulder. "I don't think your Superman has a mirror at all."

"Yes, but his princess holds one for him!" was the jesting reply.

The carriage door slammed. They rolled homeward, and Ermentrude suffered from a desperate sense of the unachieved. The princess had been impertinent, the Kéroulans rather banal. Mrs. Sheldam watched her charge's face in the intermittent lights of the rue de Rivoli.

"I think your poet a bore," she es-
sayed. Then she shook her husband—they had reached their hotel.

II

It was the garden of a poet, she declared, as, with the Kéroulans and her aunt, Ermentrude sat and slowly fanned herself, watching the Bois de Boulogne, which foamed like a cascade of green opposite this pretty little house

in Neuilly. The day was warm and the drive, despite the shaded, watered avenues, a dusty, fatiguing one. Mrs. Sheldam had, doubtfully, it is true, suggested the bourgeois comfort of the Métropolitain, but she was frowned on by her enthusiastic niece. What! ride underground in such weather? So they arrived at the poet's not in the best of humor, for Mrs. Sheldam had quietly chidden her charge on the score of her "flightiness." These foreign celebrities were well enough in their way, but—! And now Ermentrude, instead of looking Octave Kéroulan in the face, preferred the vista of the pale blue sky, awash with a scattered, fleecy white cloud, the rolling edges of which echoed the dazzling sunshine. The garden was not large, its few trees were of ample girth and their shadows most satisfying to eyes weary of the city's bright, hard surfaces. There were no sentimental plaster casts to disturb the soft harmonies of this walled-in retreat, and if Ermentrude preferred to regard with obstinacy unusual in her mobile temperament the picture of Paris below them, it was because she felt that Kéroulan was literally staring at her.

A few moments after their arrival and with the advent of tea, he had accomplished what she had fervently wished for the night she had met him—he succeeded, by several easy moves, in isolating her from her aunt, and, notwithstanding her admiration, her desire to tap with her knuckles the metal of her idol and listen for a ring of hollowness, she was alarmed. Yet, perversely, she knew that he would not exhibit his paces before his wife—naturally a disinterested spectator—or before her aunt, who was hardly "intimate" enough. The long desired hour found her disquieted. She did not have many moments to analyze these mixed emotions, for he spoke, and his voice was agreeably modulated.

"You, indeed, honor the poor poet's abode with your youth and your responsive soul, Miss Adams. I thank you, though my gratitude will seem as poor as my hospitality." She looked

at him now, a little fluttered. "You bring to me across seas the homage of a fresh nation, a fresh nature." She beat a mental retreat at these calm, confident phrases; what could he know of her homage? "And if Amiel has said, '*Un paysage est un état de l'âme*,' I may amend it by calling *my* soul a state of landscape, since it has been visited by your image." This was more reassuring, if exuberant.

"Man is mere inert matter when born, but his soul is his own work. Hence, I assert: the Creator of man is—man." Now she felt at ease. This wisdom, hewn from the vast quarry of his genius, she had encountered before in his "Golden Glaze," that book which had built temples of worship in America wherein men and women sought and found the pabulum for living beautifully. He was "talking" his book. Why not? It was certainly delightful plagiarism!

"You know, dear young lady," he continued, and his eyes, with their contracting and expanding disks, held her attention like a steady flame, "do you know that my plays, my books are but the drama of my conscience exteriorized? Out of the reservoirs of my soul I draw my inspiration. I have an esthetic horror of evidence; like Renan, I loathe the deadly heresy of affirmation; I have the certitude of doubt, for are we poets not the lovers of the truth decorated? When I built my lordly palace of art it was not with the ugly durability of marble. No; like the Mohammedan who constructed his mosque and mingled with the cement sweet-smelling musk, so I dreamed my mosque into existence with music wedded to philosophy. Music and philosophy are the twin edges of my sword. Ah! you smile and ask: Where is Woman in this sanctuary? She is not barred, I assure you. My music—is Woman. Beauty is a promise of happiness, Stendahl says. I go further: Life—the woman one has; Art—the woman one loves!"

She was startled. Her aunt and Madame Kéroulan had retired to the end of the garden and only a big

bee, brumming overhead, was near. He had arisen with the pontifical air of a man who had a weighty gospel to expound. He encircled with his potent personality the imagination of his listener; the hypnotic quality of his written word was carried leagues further in effect by his trained, soothing voice. Flattered, no longer frightened, her nerves deliciously assaulted by this colored rhetoric, Ermentrude yielded her intellectual assent. She did not comprehend. She felt only the rhythms of his speech, as sound swallowed sense. He held her captive with a pause and his eloquent eyes—they were of an extraordinary luster—completed the subjugation of her will.

"Only kissed hands are white," he murmured, and suddenly she felt a velvety kiss on her left hand. Ermentrude did not pretend to follow the words of her aunt and Madame Kéroulan as they stooped before a bed of June roses. Nor did she remember how she reached the pair. The one vivid reality of her life was the cruel act of her idol. She was not conscious of blushing, nor did she feel that she had grown pale. His wife treated her with impartial indifference, at times a smile crossing her face, with its implication—to Ermentrude—of selfish reserves. But this hateful smile cut her to the soul—one more prisoner at his chariot wheels, it proclaimed! Kéroulan was as unconcerned as if he had written a poetic line. He had expected more of an outburst, more of a rebuff; the absolute snapping of the web he had spun surprised him. His choicest music had been spread for the eternal banquet, but the invited one tarried. Very well! If not today, tomorrow! He repeated a verse of Verlaine, and with his wife dutifully at his side bowed to the two Americans and told them of the pleasure experienced. Ermentrude, her candid eyes now reproachful and suspicious, did not flinch as she took his hand—it seemed to melt in hers—but her farewell was conventional. In the street, before they

seated themselves in their carriage Mrs. Sheldam shook her head.

"Oh, my dear! What a woman! What a man! I have *such* a story to tell you. No wonder you admire these people. The wife is a genius—isn't she handsome?—but the man—he is an angel!"

"I didn't see his wings in the garden, auntie," was the curt reply.

III

THE Sheldams always stayed at the same hotel during their annual visits to Paris. It was an old-fashioned house with an entrance in the rue Saint-Honoré and another in the rue de Rivoli. The girl sat on a small balcony from which she could view the Tuileries Gardens without turning her head, while looking farther westward she saw the Place de la Concorde, its windy spaces a chessboard for rapid vehicles, whose wheels, wet from the watered streets, ground out silvery fire in the sun-rays of this gay June afternoon. Where the avenue des Champs Elysées began, a powdery haze enveloped the equipages overblown with their summer toilets, all speeding to Longchamps. It was a racing day and Ermentrude, feigning a headache, had insisted that her uncle and aunt go to the meeting. It would amuse them, she knew, and she wished to be alone. Nearly a week had passed since the visit to Neuilly, and she had been afraid to ask her aunt what Madame Kéroulan had imparted to her—afraid and also too proud. Her sensibility had been grievously wounded by the plainly expressed feelings of Octave Kéroulan. She had reviewed without prejudice his behavior, and she could not set down to mere Latin gallantry either his words or his action. No, there was too much intensity in both—ah, how she rebelled at the brutal disillusionment!—and there were, she argued, method and sequence in his approach and attack. If she had been the average coquetting creature the offense might

May 1905

not have been so mortal. But, so she told herself again and again—as if to frighten away lurking darker thoughts, ready to spring out and devour her good resolutions—she had worshiped her idol with reservations. His poetry, his philosophy, were so inextricably blended that they smote her nerves like the impact of some bright perfume, some sharp chord of modern music. Dangerously she had filed at her emotions in the service of culture and was now paying the penalty for her ardent confidence. His ideas, vocal with golden meanings, were never meant to be translated into the vernacular of life, never to be transposed from higher to lower levels; this base betrayal of his ideals she felt Kéroutan had committed. Had he not said that love should be like “*un baiser sur un miroir*”? Was he, after all, what the princess had called him? And was he only a mock sun swimming in a firmament of glories which he could have outshone?

A servant knocked, and not receiving a response, entered with a letter. The superscription was strange. She opened and read:

DEAR AND TENDER CHILD: I know you were angry with me when we parted. I am awaiting here below your answer to come to you and bare my heart. Say yes!

“Is the gentleman downstairs?” she asked. The servant bowed. The blood in her head buzzing, she nodded, and the man disappeared. Standing there in the bright summer light, Ermentrude Adams saw her face in the oval glass above the fireplace, saw its pallor, the strained expression of the eyes, and like a drowning person she made a swift inventory of her life and, with the insane hope of one about to be swallowed up by the waters, she grasped at a solitary straw. Let him come; she would have an explanation from him! The torture of doubt might then be brought to an end. . . .

Someone glided into the apartment. Turning quickly Ermentrude recognized Madame Kéroutan. Before she could orient herself that lady took her by both hands and, uttering apologetic

words, forced the amazed girl into a chair.

“Don’t be frightened, dear young lady. I am not here to judge, but to explain. Yes, I knew my husband loves you. But do not believe in him. He is a *terrific* man.” This word she emphasized as if doubtful of its meaning. “Ah, if you but knew the inferno of my existence! There are so many like you—stop, do not leave! You are not to blame. I, Lillias Kéroutan, do not censure your action. My husband is an evil man and a charlatan. Hear me out! He has only the gift of words. He steals all his profundities of art from dead philosophers. He is not a genuine poet. He is not a dramatist. I swear to you that he is now the butt of artistic Paris. The *Princesse de Lancovani* made him—she is another of his sort. He *was* the mode; now he is desperate because his day has passed. He knows you are rich. He desires your money, not *you*. I discovered that he was coming here this day. Oh, I am cleverer than he. I followed. Here I am to save you from him—and from yourself—he is not now below in the salon.”

“Please go away!” indignantly answered Ermentrude. She was furious at this horrible, plain-spoken, jealous creature. Save her from herself—as if ever she had wavered! The disinterested adoration she had entertained for the great artist—what a hideous ending was this! The tall, blond woman with the narrow, light blue eyes watched the girl. How could anyone call her handsome, Ermentrude wondered. Then her visitor noticed the crumpled letter on the table. With a gesture of triumph she secured it and smiling her superior smile she left, closing the door softly behind her.

Only kissed hands are white! Ermentrude threw herself on the couch, her cheeks burning, her heart tugging in her bosom like a ship impatient at its anchorage. And was this the sordid end of a beautiful dream? . . .

“Do you know, dearest, we have had such news!” exclaimed Mrs. Sheldam

as she entered, and so charged with her happiness that she did not notice the drawn features of her niece. "Charlie, Charlie will be here some time next week. He arrives at Havre. He has just cabled his father. Let us go down to meet the boy." Charlie was the only son of the Sheldams and fonder of his cousin than she dare tell herself. She burst into tears, which greatly pleased her aunt.

In the train, eight days later, Ermentrude sat speechless in company with her aunt and uncle. But as the train approached Havre she remembered something.

"Aunt Clara," she bravely asked, "do you recall the afternoon we spent at the Kéroulans? What did Madame Kéroulan tell you then? Is it a secret?" She held tightly clenched in her hand the arm-rest at the side of the compartment.

"Oh, dear, no! The madame was very chatty, very communicative. It's funny I've not told you before. She confessed that she was the happiest woman on earth; not only was she married to a grand genius—for the life of me I can't see where *that* comes in!—but he was a good man in the bargain. It appears that his life is made weary by women who pester him with their attentions. Even our princess—yes, *the* princess; isn't it shocking?—was a perfect nuisance until Mr. Kéroulan assured her that, though he owed much of his success in the world to her, yet he would never betray the trust reposed in him by his wife. What's the mat-

ter, dear, does the motion of the car affect you? It *does* rock! And *he* shows her all the letters he gets from silly women admirers—oh, these foreign women and their queer ways! And he tells her the way they make up to him when he meets them in society."

Ermentrude shivered. The princess also! And with all her warning about the Superman! Now she understood! Then she took the hand of Mrs. Sheldam, and, stroking it, whispered:

"Auntie, I'm so glad I am going to Havre, going to see Charlie soon." The lids of her eyes were wet. Mrs. Sheldam had never been so motherly.

"You *are* a darling!" she answered as she squeezed Ermentrude's arm. "But there is someone who doesn't seem to care much for Havre." She pointed out Mr. Sheldam, who, oblivious of picturesque Normandy through which the train was speeding, slept serenely. Ermentrude envied him his repose. He had never stared into the maddening mirror which turned poets into Supermen and—sometimes monsters. Had she herself not gazed into this distorting glass? The tune of her life had never sounded so discouragingly faint and inutile. Perhaps she did not possess the higher qualities that could extort from a nature so rich and various as Octave Kéroulan's its noblest music! Perhaps his wife had told the truth to Mrs. Sheldam and had lied to her! And then, through a merciful mist of tears, Ermentrude saw Havre, saw her future.



KEPT HIM POOR

MRS. DORCAS—A woman who can't reform a man before marriage can't do it afterward.

MRS. SPENDALL—Oh, yes, she can. Now, for instance, my husband used to have expensive tastes.

A DISTANT SPRING

I WHO love the spring so well
 Shall be sleeping some glad day
 When her hosts come back to dwell
 In their old, familiar way.

I shall live, alas! no more
 In some distant April hour
 When the spring flings wide her door,
 Calling leaf and bloom and flower.

I shall sleep—but I shall dream
 In my home beneath the ground,
 And my slumbering heart shall teem
 With its visions deep, profound.

I shall know, ere you will guess
 (Though with life I have no part),
 What new golden loveliness
 Stirs within the old earth's heart.

I shall hear the first soft sound
 When the spring is born anew,
 And rejoice, beneath the ground,
 At the bliss to come to you.

And the dreams that I shall dream
 In that spring when I am dead,
 May arise until they seem
 Blossoms white or blossoms red!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



KITCHEN CHAT

THE COOK—I think stories of high life are so interesting.
 THE MAID—Yes, but the best ones are not fit to print.



HE DIDN'T SUIT

DEALER—This bird doesn't swear.
 CUSTOMER—Then I won't take him; I want a good, healthy parrot.

THE TWO O'LEANS

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

“IT is a strange thing,” I said testily to Burchard, “that the band always plays in the other square.”

We had gone out on the fire-escape skirting our windows, to listen to a passing street band. Ours is an old-fashioned importing house down toward the Battery, Van Syke Brothers, with a heavy China and India trade, and more old barnacles like Burchard and myself upon the commercial ship than most houses in the business. We lingered a moment, looking after the retreating band, which, to justify my words, burst into a flare of music as it passed the next crossing.

“Yes,” agreed Burchard whimsically; “it plays in the square before and the square after, for old fellows like you and me; but did you ever think how glorious it must be to be the man who lives in the square where the band always plays?”

“There is no such person,” I returned shortly as I went back to my desk.

“Oh, yes, there is.” Burchard took up the theme. “There’s Tom O’Lean—you’ll never deny, Shippington, that the band plays in any square where Tom dwells. Why, if there is a good side to a woman’s face, it is always the side turned toward O’Lean—the other man gets the wart on her cheek or the unfortunate twist to her smile.”

O’Lean was that absurd composite, a Scotch-Irishman. I always told him that name of his was O’Lynn, and that he was a lineal descendant of Brian O’Lynn—just a wild Irishman—and the “Scotch” a mere rhetorical flourish.

But Burchard had Tom down finer. It was Burchard’s conceit that a wild Irishman did inhabit the *peristilium* of O’Lean’s being and lounge very obviously in the vestibule. But once penetrate the *æcus*, get into the heart of the house, and you met the hard-headed—yea, and the hard-hearted—canny Scot.

This description, if fanciful, was true. The son of old Thomas O’Lean, who really made Van Syke Brothers what it is, O’Lean himself came into the business in ’95. The house was rather on the downhill then—I mentioned the barnacles, and they may have had their weight in retarding progress. Tom O’Lean took the entire Eastern business and breathed into it the breath of vigorous life; he made it, in short, the most extensive in New York.

To follow out Burchard’s distinction in the matter, it was the Irishman in O’Lean, and the Irishman only, who was known in society, where he was a huge favorite. He responded hilariously to every light call. The senses were his. He was a harp to music; a well of tears and laughter; a hot-headed, ill-considering fellow, instant in quarrel, struck by the droll or the ludicrous while it was occurring. And generous, too; he would give away the coat off O’Lean’s back, would the Irishman; but if there were time, that the Scotchman in the inner chambers got in his word, the coat might be replevined and a bill for hire sent in.

The Irishman in O’Lean could never have made a living; he would have quarreled with half his customers, and given all he possessed to the other half

—and the Irishman was O'Lean himself where he came in personal contact with people.

Then, since he inhabited the vestibule, met the crowd and answered when O'Lean was spoken to, one would have said that Tom must be a poor business man. Nay, but it was the Scotchman, surely, who took full charge of the Oriental end of that enormous foreign traffic. A tremendously wearing position it was, calling for dogged patience, endless hard work, acumen and diplomacy beyond the resources of most seasoned business men, and O'Lean was a young fellow. Talk to him of business, face to face, and he could propose more visionary plans in a half-hour than even himself could attempt to carry into practice in a week. But put a pen in his hand, give him no one but his stenographer to speak to, his half-dozen clerks to captain, and, most needful of all, approach him by letter and from long range—as far off as China, say—and he was the soul of discretion.

Old man Van Syke, head of the firm, used to say that it was O'Lean's sober second thought that saved him. I was more inclined to agree with Burchard: O'Lean had none but sober thoughts, first or second, for matters which approached him through the mails—by routes strictly unemotional.

He had not been a year in the house before he was engaged to Minna Van Syke, granddaughter of the head of the firm and orphan child of one of its richest members. "I told you," Burchard said when it was announced, "that the band always played in O'Lean's square." And he asserted, in his usual fanciful fashion, that Minna Van Syke was engaged to the Irishman in O'Lean, and would never really know the other. As pretty as a picture, with three millions in her own right, the merriest, gayest little butterfly that ever lived her life out dancing on her toes from one joy to another, how should she see any side of her lover's character except that which was ravished and delighted with all her charms?

"Courtship's a social matter; that's

the Irishman's part," said Burchard, shaking his head dolefully. "But matrimony is business; and the woman who marries Tom O'Lean will find the Scotchman in his character fast enough."

"Tom loves the girl—" I began.

"Does he?" Burchard interrupted. "I doubt it—I doubt it, Shippington. That side of him which never thinks is content with her—dazzled by her, indeed. But I tell you, old man, on the day Tom O'Lean sits down and contemplates that child calmly—weighs her—she'll be no more to him than a painted card—and the Scotchman's decisions are final, mind you."

This was what made it a tragedy when O'Lean's hearing began to fail. It would set a man to thinking how each of us—the real ego—is slave, creature, creation of that physical machine which we drive, and which we could stop at pleasure; which we may shamefully neglect and injure, or carefully preserve and care for. The body is, after all, a colored glass through which the soul looks. The world must be of that tint which the glass throws upon it; and, conversely, the ego, the soul, must appear to outsiders of that tint which the body throws back upon it. A man addresses his audience, the world, through his body; and this body makes strange and subtle limitations to his expression. When a bearing is broken in the machine, or a connection destroyed, it may mean disaster to the soul, or it might even mean the conferring of a boon. And when random chance removes this disability, frees a cog of the mechanism, it may be doing the soul a cruel service.

After all, just what each of us wants is not the most perfect mechanism, but the machine which will best express the soul within.

When O'Lean's deafness first began to grow upon him, his engagement to Minna Van Syke, his recent membership in the firm, made his future look as secure before him as a human future well could look. But of the foundations of this future, half had been built by the

Scotchman and half by the Irishman, and it wanted both to carry the structure to successful completion.

It was by no means all at once that we saw or felt the eclipse of the Irishman. O'Lean would still occasionally engineer a night out with the boys, even after his infirmity became noticeable and annoying. I have seen him "sit in" at a stiff game of poker when the bluffs of his opponents had to be repeated to him in yells; and he himself would laugh over the incongruity of his amusements and his old-gentleman-like weakness.

But these times grew fewer; the Irishman was no longer at the door or window to hear and respond to your hail; all communication went under the Scot's considering eye; and one day came the break in his love-affairs which I felt afterward I had been expecting from the day I first knew Tom's hearing was going.

Minna Van Syke was at the office; she had arranged for a yachting party in what was to O'Lean the busiest season of the year.

"You must excuse me, my dear," I heard him say. "It will be impossible for me to leave New York this week."

"And yet you claim that you are fond of yachting!" pouted Minna. The words sounded quite like a challenge, after hearing them repeated three times and in keys of increasing shrillness.

"Oh—yachting? So I am," O'Lean agreed quietly. "I am taking some people from our Yokohama branch out in the yacht this week; that is why I cannot go with you." And he regarded her with a grave smile.

The yacht belonged in a manner to the house. If O'Lean used it that week, Miss Van Syke could not.

"Tom!" she cried, "did you not hear me when I said that I had invited the Beekmans and Tommy Degraffenreid and the Ottway girls to a yachting party for next week? Oh—you never hear anything!"

And with flushed cheeks, eyes over-bright, and hands that trembled al-

most laughably, she searched upon the desk for pencil and paper.

While Tom sat absorbed in a letter from Bankok, his fiancée wrote furiously for five minutes, threw her communication down before him and swept out of the office.

We all supposed—you will be observing by this time that the business office was full of old-time employees, and very much like a large family—we all supposed, then, that this note was the breaking of Minna Van Syke's engagement to O'Lean. Whether it was or not, the engagement was broken about this time.

The new O'Lean—one could call him nothing else, so changed was he—went phlegmatically about his duties, was the very backbone of the house and appeared to take a fatherly interest in the matter when, a year after, Miss Minna married, very suddenly, a young Southerner whom she had met at Old Point.

O'Lean's handsome, sunny face grew to wear that withdrawn expression which belongs to the deaf and which is almost equivalent to old age in its alteration of any countenance. He had dropped so completely out of the ranks of ladies' men that it came—to me, at least—with a shock of surprise when I heard the news of his engagement to a cousin of his late fiancée.

Florence Allston was a Van Syke also; her mother had been Katharine Van Syke, the old man's niece; so Tom did not go outside the firm. No doubt he had been thrown much in the young lady's society since the breaking of his engagement to Minna. Florence was a woman in every way fitted to please the present Tom O'Lean—or Thomas O'Lean, as people were getting to call him. Handsome in her grave, dark way, witty, too, and brilliant when she chose to talk, she was in general rather a silent person, with an alarming number of letters which she might have worn after her name had she chosen, since she had gathered them by years of toil at one of the foreign universities which are open to women. Never so much a society woman as her Van

Syke cousins, she was yet a prized member of a very charming circle.

I may as well admit here and now—we shall get on more easily, I see, if I do so—that I am extravagantly fond of Tom O'Lean. In fact, lonely old fellow that I am, I love him like a son. And I grew to love Florence Allston, too, during her brief engagement to my boy. Her father was for the most part in China and the East Indies, and I artfully suggested that I be accepted as temporary understudy to him, maintaining my position only during good behavior. I was laughingly accepted, and the intimacy which grew up between us emboldened me to remonstrate when I heard that the pair were going abroad on their wedding tour, intending to have an operation performed in Munich which, it was hoped, would restore Tom's hearing.

"Why not have this done before you are married?" I queried cautiously. "Surely there are surgeons as skilful in New York as in Germany."

"I think so, too, Mr. Shippington, but"—Florence paused and looked at me—"you know it is possible that the operation will not be successful; and we are told that if it is not Tom will lose his hearing entirely."

"Well?" I prompted.

"Well," she smiled gently, "you know what Tom is. You know that if he found himself stone deaf and without the prospect of recovering his hearing, it would be just like him to develop honorable scruples. Now," laying a slim white hand upon my arm, and looking at me with two dark eyes which were surely lamps of love that might have led a man anywhere, "I am not afraid—nor ashamed—to tell you, Mr. Shippington, that I want Tom, and I'm willing to take him with any infirmity that may be sent upon him. So, as the case is not considered promising, I urge that the operation be after we are married."

"Yes," I said to myself, "she will take Tom O'Lean with all his infirmities fast enough—the Tom O'Lean she knows. But how will she like him without them? How will the wild

Irishman—long since deceased, whom she probably never knew—strike her sedate maiden fancy?"

The O'Leans were abroad for a year. I heard, in the early part of their stay, that the operation had been successfully performed. I met them first at a garden party given for the benefit of the St. Something's Orphanage at Van Syke's place up on the Hudson. Tom was coming back into the office the next week. He looked ten years younger than when I had last seen him. That patient, half-wearied look was erased from his countenance. In short, he was the old sparkling Tom O'Lean—delight of the wilder young people of his circle, terror of the staid elders, who felt their authority slipping when Tom led the revolt.

He was gabbling to such an extent that I fancied he must have had too much wine. He was surging about the place with two girls, one on each arm, little laughing chits of school-girls who were screaming with delight over his witticisms; and later, he auctioned off some fancy articles in his own inimitable style. The hits he made were witty—but daringly personal.

I glanced at Mrs. O'Lean's high-bred, handsome face; it was flushed, and her eyes sparkled—I apprehended the worst. There she sat, in statuesque beauty, her draperies drawn about her, the white parasol over her shoulder making a background for her graceful dark head. O'Lean jested and gibed, took the word and made his wit play upon it in many colors—some of them rather equivocal. The crowd went wild over him, as they always did; but I noticed that Florence was not laughing.

True, she was a rather grave sort of person, yet my foreboding heart read dissatisfaction in her bearing, from the tip of the aigrette in her dark braids to the toe of her dainty kid slipper.

The thing followed me home and haunted me. Tom and I had occupied rooms in the same apartment house before his marriage; I missed him

painfully. I wanted to go and tell Florence what a good heart my boy had, how the virtues the Irish O'Lean promised were borne out well by the Scotchman, when you came to know him intimately—I wanted to pour out all this to her who had been his wife nearly a year!

Yes, yes, I see—you have identified me. I am that party who “would interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying”! So a week later I set out for the handsome house in Seventy-first street, determined to have the matter settled and to do what I could toward making peace.

I found no one at home but Florence, and the long twilight talk we had together was my opportunity. Yet the blessed girl had such a wonderful reserve and dignity about her that I had barely touched the edge of my subject when Tom came into the quiet rooms.

He was in his noisiest and least reasonable humor, and my heart sank when Florence, pouring his tea for him, repeated my version of Burchard's remarks about the Irishman and Scotchman. For an instant, as I looked at her, I was willing to say that such tactlessness ought to cost her Tom O'Lean; and I wondered why good women were always stupid.

“Oh, yes,” agreed Tom easily, “that's Burchard's wisdom. And Shipington believes in it; according to him you are a bigamist, Florence; you've married an Irishman, and a Scotchman, too.”

“Not quite that,” I interrupted testily. “I was trying to explain to Florence that she'd married a Scotchman—a decent body who knew how to behave himself, even if he was rather dull—and that when that German surgeon made you a present of your hearing once more, she got a chance to see, for the first time, the wild Irishman, who is liable to shock and astonish her.”

“Do you think so?” asked Florence O'Lean's low, commanding voice. “I may as well make a confession, then.”

Her face flushed, she glanced to-

ward her husband; she looked exactly as she had a week ago at the auction. I dreaded what must follow.

“The first time I saw Tom—do you remember when it was, dear?” and she put out a slim, white hand to her husband.

He shook his head, as he took possession of the fingers, and pressed them softly.

“It was long before his engagement to Minna was broken,” she said softly, speaking to me, but looking for the most part at him. “And he has been just Tom O'Lean to me ever since then, the man I loved, whether he was very deaf and it gave him an odd, diffident manner, or whether he was, as on that first day, a little tipsy and inclined to be quarrelsome.”

I leaned back in my chair and agreed with numerous philosophers who are dead, a cloud of them who are living, and some others who are yet to be born, that the ways of women are past finding out—that no man may read the heart feminine. “A trifle tipsy,” I murmured weakly, at last.

“He's been looking to hear of a divorce in the O'Lean family!” O'Lean shouted, laughing. “He came here as a peacemaker this day!” And looking at my red face he roared again.

Tom's wife turned her dark eyes upon me with a smile that was kinder than most women's spoken assurances.

“You know whether I love you two children or not,” I protested. “I couldn't help worrying.”

“Worry no more,” flourished Tom, as he stepped into the dining-room to compound a recondite punch the like of which is not to be sipped elsewhere.

Florence laughed. Then she leaned close, and spoke in a low, soft voice:

“You will forget it if I trust you so entirely as to tell you something I have never hinted to any creature living?” she queried.

I nodded and laid my hand on hers.

“I loved Tom from that first moment,” the soft voice said. “He was engaged to Minna, and, of course, it

was my part to think as little about him as I could. But when he was free, when she threw him over, I set myself as deliberately to win him—to court him, if you like that word better—as ever a woman did.”

“And you won him,” I added, remembering the adoration in which volatile, irresponsible, irrepressible Tom seemed to hold this quiet, well-balanced wife of his.

“I won him,” she agreed, “just as I love him—the whole man—Scotchman—Irishman—all. There is no possibility in Tom’s nature which I do not love; and”—the slim hand beneath my own turned itself over and grasped my fingers in sudden emphasis—“and I believe there is no possibility in his nature that cannot love me.”

I was like a man who walks into a room and presses the button which lights it. Everything suddenly looked different to me, illuminated and glorified by this unexpected bit of truth. Here had I been, like many an over-anxious parent, confronting a painful figment of my fears and fancies about

these two young people whom I loved. And it seems that in fact this was one of the matches which are made in heaven. The Irishman certainly needs Florence, with her big balance wheel of patient common sense, much more than the canny, deaf Scotchman did. And to think that she is that hundredth woman who can see it all, know it all and love him the better!

And then came Tom with the punch.

“She loves him all,” he said gently, handing me my glass, laying a light touch on his wife’s head, “just as all of him loves her—Scotchman or Irishman. You and Burchard are gay old philosophers; but in fact there’s nothing like matrimony to centralize a man, to unify him, as it were. Perhaps Florence sees the real O’Lean through those other fellows.”

We clinked our little glasses together; then I lifted mine and, smiling upon my boy and my girl, gave a toast, and we all laughed over it.

“Tom O’Lean,” I said, “both of him! In fine, long life to the two O’Leans!”



TRIOLET TO INNOCENZA

(ACCOMPANYING A PAIR OF GLOVES)

TEN perfect little Loves—
 (I kiss each dainty finger!)
 Shall fill these lucky gloves—
 Ten perfect little Loves!
 Who’d dream a flock of doves
 In *such* dark nests would linger!
 Ten perfect little Loves
 I kiss—*each* dainty finger!

RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER.



HE WAS NOT WELL POSTED

HAROLD—May I kiss your hand?
 GERTRUDE—You should have higher aspirations.

JONQUILS

By Mark Lee Luther

“TEMPERATURE normal, pulse like a clock.” The surgeon briskly pocketed his watch. “My dear Miss Marbury, you’re as well as nurse there, or myself.”

His patient showed no elation at the announcement.

“But I don’t feel so very fit, Dr. West,” she protested. “Besides, I’ve heard that for months after appendicitis one——”

“One hears great nonsense,” he interrupted bluntly. “Get more oxygen, Miss Marbury.” His keen glance ranged the costly refinement of her surroundings. “Get into the open air, bodily and mentally.”

The lady watched him in frank admiration as he dropped his crisp staccato sentences. He was something new under her sun. Appendicitis, plus Dr. West, had freshened existence; and now, as the great surgeon’s part in the new dispensation seemed at an end, she felt that to prolong the novelty she would even welcome a mild relapse. When the nurse withdrew upon an errand of West’s, Miss Marbury turned to him impulsively.

“If my mind is ill, prescribe for it,” she invited. “I put myself in your hands.”

“That is scarcely in my line,” he rejoined drily. “I’m neither parson nor alienist.”

“As a personal favor, then. What do you recommend?”

West’s glance again inventoried Miss Marbury’s immediate household goods.

“That yellow sunset there,” he said, with an abrupt nod toward a painting; “an Inness, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” she assented wonderingly;

“one of his early things. It’s painted a trifle hard for Inness, don’t you think?”

The surgeon left her query unanswered.

“Its neighbor is a Meissonier?” he hazarded.

“You mean the drowsy cardinal above the cabinet? No; a Vibert—his best period.”

“And the cabinet itself is medieval, I take it?”

“Yes; I picked it up in Siena.”

“While I believe you mentioned the other day that that binding at your elbow was done for—what’s-his-name——?”

“The Petrarch is a Grolier.” She touched it caressingly. “This other thing was——”

“Never mind,” he cut in. “Surely I’ve catalogued enough of them to enforce my point! Can’t you guess your own ailment? Can’t you write your own prescription?”

Miss Marbury looked bewildered.

“You mean——?” she hesitated.

“I mean you’re mentally dyspeptic, of course. Change your diet. Try a few common things.”

Miss Marbury took his brusquerie humbly.

“How sane you are!” she responded.

“How bracing! Now, if you would only go a step further and tell me where to begin——”

“There you are!” West broke in. “Such poverty of resource is itself a symptom of disease.”

For an instant his listener looked as if she found his frankness almost too tonic, but his next remark soothed her self-esteem.

“The fact that I can’t give you a

clean-cut answer proves that I'm bitten with it, too," he added disgustedly. "We're all of us more or less over-civilized. We goad our emotions as we tickle our jaded palates. Look at our very churches; they spice our faith, spice our hope, spice our charity. Simple things have lost all savor. Who cares for a truly natural book, a wholesome play? Yes"—his eye fell upon a bowl of gorgeous maroon chrysanthemums—"who even cares for a common flower?"

He buttoned his overcoat with a series of decisive jerks and explored energetically for his gloves. Miss Marbury groped desperately for a pretext to spin out the interview. Her makeshift was fatuous, but it served.

"What is your favorite flower?" she inquired; and then bit her lip at the question's inanity. To her relief West gave the matter his serious consideration.

"The jonquil," he answered after a little pause.

"How singular!" said she. "Jonquils are such awkward things to arrange."

"True; if people will arrange them."

"And they're often cloyingly sweet."

"True again—indoors."

"Oh," said the lady, brightening, "I see. You are thinking of a formal garden. A friend of mine used them very effectively at her place at Lenox, I remember. There was a space just below the pergola which—"

West's expression made her falter.

"No, no, no," he interposed. "I'm not thinking of any such trig, fashionable affair at all. There wasn't a pergola within a hundred miles of the spot I mean."

She waited for further explanations, but he forsook the topic in midair to refer to the nurse whose return was heralded by a growing tinkle of glass.

"Why did you take Miss Wilson out of uniform?" he demanded in an undertone.

"I disliked seeing it after you let me get up. Then, too, she has become more companion than nurse."

"I sha'n't thank you if you over-

civilize her," he frowned. "Don't spoil a really useful member of society."

He gave the nurse one or two directions and extended his hand to Miss Marbury.

"I sha'n't call again unless I'm sent for," he announced.

She detained his hand an instant.

"Please drop in unprofessionally," she entreated. "I'd like to ask you about so many things. There's that unfinished jonquil story, for example."

West shook his head emphatically at the mention of social calls.

"I find little time for that sort," he stated candidly. "As for the story"—he hesitated on the threshold—"there's a little play running downtown called 'Jonquils' which, in a way, explains what I'm driving at. It isn't much of a play, I suppose, but it's well meant, and more than well acted."

"Why, to be sure," said Miss Marbury. "It's that little curtain-raiser at the Garrick. Would you prescribe it for—me?"

West laughed—a trifle consciously, she fancied; and for an instant seemed to hover on the brink of a confidence. To her chagrin it came to nothing.

"Those tablets I handed Miss Wilson are my only prescription," he returned abruptly. "Good day."

Miss Marbury walked to the window and watched him address some brief order to his chauffeur, light a cigar, and then, without a glance right or left, much less upward, enter his automobile and glide swiftly down the street.

"Iceberg!" she shivered, turning away.

"I beg your pardon," said the nurse.

"Nothing. I was merely wondering if your Dr. West is always so impersonal. Do you suppose he ever sees a woman in any other light than as an anatomical specimen—so many bones to classify, so much tissue to dissect?"

Miss Wilson refused to smile. In fact, she bridled. West had as imposing a feminine chorus as a popular clergyman, and she was of the superlatively loyal.

"No one in pain or real trouble ever thought him hard," she rejoined in a tone which her interlocutor felt tantamount to rebuke. "I've mentioned case after case, any one of which answers your criticism."

"Yes, I know," said Miss Marbury, with a sudden bored perception that a fund of anecdote in which West prominently figured had had much to do with this young person's change of status from nurse to confidante. "Pray don't take me so seriously," she added lightly. "Nobody else does. Of course the man is human, if appearances are against him. Will you touch the bell, please? I am going to follow instructions and get more oxygen."

For upward of an hour thereafter Miss Marbury's brougham formed a unit in the afternoon pageant of the Park. She was scarcely of it herself, however. At times she would emerge from her preoccupation long enough to return a bow, but oftener her friends whipped by in puzzled affront. Suddenly she took up the tube communicating with her coachman and bade him drive to a downtown address which in due course proved to be a florist's. She stayed the nurse's movement to alight.

"Don't bother," she said; "let me practice shifting for myself. I can't expect to have you with me always."

It was courteously spoken, but to the other woman's ear it seemed prophetic of a not distant parting of their ways. As the carriage moved on at a burly police officer's behest, she speculated idly upon her next assignment.

In certain shops Miss Marbury's entrance always induced an abnormal activity. This was one of them. No less than three overdressed attendants awoke from a statuesque leisure and raced for the privilege of receiving her commands. She tranquilly awaited the issue of their rivalry and brought her lorgnon to bear upon the victor.

"Jonquils," she said laconically.

With apologies befitting his crime the clerk explained that jonquils were out of season. A further discourse upon the disobliging habits of the

flower lost at once its audience and its point with the bustling arrival of the proprietor himself.

"You said jonquils, Miss Marbury?" he interrupted. "You have come to the one dealer in the city who can fill your order."

She followed the complacent little Greek to a vast refrigerator, from one of whose lower compartments he drew a jar of the yellow blossoms she sought.

"Behold!" he cried, with a flourish. "Jonquils in December."

Miss Marbury gave the miracle a polite scrutiny.

"I dare say it is a bit early for them," she remarked. "How did you manage it?"

The Greek's chest expanded.

"How?" he repeated. "By patience; that is the secret, madam. The jonquil is a stubborn fellow. He likes not to be hurried. He demands his winter sleep. He must be frozen, in short. Mostly, when forced, he comes up—as we florists say—blind. For a handful of blossoms you often massacre a hundred bulbs, poor innocents! But I—I did not hesitate at the sacrifice. It was in the cause of art, of beauty."

His customer took the latter reference to herself at first, but he speedily undeceived her.

"An artist asked me to coax them out," he went on to explain. "'The expense,' say he, 'nossing!' You know these great artists, madam? He tells me he must have them for the portrait of a lady—an actress. In her play are jonquils and he would pose her in—in—how shall I say the English?"

"I presume you mean in character," supplied Miss Marbury. "How very interesting. Now, if the artist has had all he needs I will take the remainder. And let me have some ribbon to match the petals—several yards, I think. I wish to arrange them myself."

The florist stood by, outwardly all admiration but with fingers which ached to interfere, while she grouped and regrouped the unpliant stems.

"There," she said finally, with a last critical glance; "I think that will do."

She handed him her card, mentioned the street and number to which the flowers were at once to be sent, and turned away. The Greek overtook her just as his liveried carriage attendant was with due pomp and circumstance delivering this most valued patron into the hands of her own retainers.

"But the name?" he supplicated. "Madam has forgotten to give the name."

Miss Marbury blushed.

"West," she murmured hurriedly. "Dr. Roger West."

"West," trumpeted the little man with odious particularity. "Dr. Roger West."

Miss Marbury avoided her companion's eyes.

"The Garrick Theatre," she directed, as the footman closed the door of the carriage; then added casually to Miss Wilson: "Everybody dins that play 'Jonquils' in my ears. Tonight we'll judge it for ourselves."

"You're sure you feel equal to it?" asked the nurse, with professional solicitude. "You have not tried late hours yet, remember."

"Quite sure. It's merely a one-act little thing, you know. If we like we can leave before the regular play. It is the curtain-raiser, apparently, which is the fad."

They met ample proof of the latter fact during an unconscionable wait at the box-office. The clamorous ticket speculators lining the curb proffered "seats for 'Jonquils'," the passers-by had no comment for the longer play, the very press notices upon the billboards flanking the entrance dealt with the curtain-raiser alone; while further up the street they spied a sign-painter, slung far aloft alongside a dead wall, blocking in a huge presentment of the all-significant flower. When the footman finally reappeared at the window of the brougham it was to report that the one hope of seats for that evening lay with the usurers of the sidewalk.

"Hit's this 'Jawnquils' what's to blyme," he explained feelingly.

Miss Marbury herself now took the negotiation in hand and presently drove home successful. Her interest, at first casual, was now whetted keen, and she employed what leisure remained to her before dinner in a reperusal of such criticisms of the little play as she could lay hands upon. She regretted that she had not hit upon the idea of a box-party including West, though she doubted whether so busy a man could be induced to witness any play twice. Ultimately, she decided that if he could be tempted, she would carry out the project yet.

This latter decision, which she reached in the theatre during the overture, was the upshot of a scrap of overheard conversation on the part of an apparently sane gentleman, sitting just behind, who very audibly confessed that he had already seen "Jonquils" four times. This enthusiast had other revelations. He knew the playwright, it seemed, whose name the program did not state; and he had met the young actress whose interpretation of "Jonquils" had instantly proclaimed her an artist of unsuspected imagination and power.

One bit of monologue ran thus:

"She made a hit at the school of acting—couldn't help it, you know—and when the time came she didn't lack for engagements. They weren't anything big, her roles; light comedy, ingénue, mostly—same sort of thing you'll see her handle in the regular play tonight. It's good, legitimate acting, but not to be mentioned in the 'Jonquils' class."

His feminine companion here interposed a low-pitched question.

"Why, it was this way," he continued. "As her guardian, he naturally felt that he knew her capabilities better than the managers. Besides, he knows the stage. He has been a student of the drama for years. It's almost his only recreation. Well, as I was saying, he didn't like the parts they gave her, and was always on the hunt for something better. Nothing ready-made seemed to fit, and finally he took his ideas to one or two play-writing friends.

They were unimaginative hacks, I guess, for they laughed at him. He had fractured the unities, or something sacred to theatrical red tape. Anyhow, such tomfool stuff couldn't be acted, and wouldn't be listened to if it could. So he just turned to and wrote this little curtain-raiser himself. Some boyhood memory suggested it, he said. Beg pardon? You always thought him a grumpy woman-hater? That's a good joke, if you only knew it." The man chuckled happily a moment. "You don't see the point? Of course not. You'd see it quick enough if you could guess another little story that's back of 'Jonquils.' Don't tease me to tell. He—they—that is, it wouldn't be good business to let the public into the secret yet. What! I've as good as told? Nonsense! Why can't it mean anything else, Miss Cleverness? Well, then, it is so. He said that if the newspapers—" Whereupon the music swelled to an abrupt climax, the speaker's voice trailed off indistinctly, and the house darkened for the play.

A formless query haunted Miss Marbury's mind as the curtain rose. It was as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp, the shadow cast by a question to come rather than a full-blown interrogation; and before she could even attempt to capture it, the stage picture routed it utterly.

The play! Who of the thousands that surrendered to its naïve charm ever succeeded in telling precisely what it was that won them? Descriptions never described it. If one playgoer vaguely called it the story of a children's party, another would promptly scout such a labeling; it was nothing so studied; say, rather, a chance flocking together of youngsters just loose from the school-room. In one thing, however, all agreed: its keynote was spring. The treble laughter, the tender green of the foliage, the glowing bed of jonquils bordering the old-fashioned garden where the little comedy ran its course—these, and a hundred deft touches, all bespoke life in its vernal freshness. Plot there

was almost none. A fairy tale from the lips of the impromptu child hostess, a game or two, a quarrel, a reconciliation—such, baldly stated, were its elements from which, thus dissected, you found that the living thing itself had taken wing. Its volatile essence was no more to be distilled in words than the childhood it so subtly interpreted can be lived twice.

In common with the great audience Miss Marbury caught her breath when the end came. That momentary hush always followed the drop of the curtain as surely as it, in turn, would give place to a tempest of applause. Miss Marbury's enthusiasm seldom discharged its well-bred energy in manual form, but a split seam in her left glove later convinced her that for once she had shared an emotion with the common ruck. Then the curtain lifted again and one grasped the prime wonder of it all, that the central figure in the supremely natural scene was no twelve-year-old girl, but a woman.

Miss Marbury's talkative neighbor again launched into explanations.

"She spent day after day watching children in the parks," he was saying. "Her husband helped her a lot, too. He's a keen observer, extraordinarily keen. His profession trains him, I suppose. She got many a point from him in the rehearsals. He gives them yet, for that matter. You'll often see him here. He drops into the manager's box over there in the lower right-hand tier. Her voice? It's as mature as your own. She is taller than she looks on the stage. You see, her spring-heels—"

But at this pass something vastly more important quenched Miss Marbury's languid interest in his gossip. An usher was handing flowers over the footlights. To her unaided vision they seemed yellow. A closer scrutiny proved them jonquils—jonquils in December—jonquils loosely bound together with a familiar knot of ribbon the color of their petals! The card of the giver brushed the actress's fingers and with a womanly little gesture of

pleasure she raised her eyes from its legend to a box in the lower right-hand tier.

Miss Marbury's clattering lorgnon drew the nurse's glance.

"It has tired you," she exclaimed contritely. "We shouldn't have come."

Miss Marbury rose.

"It has been a bit of a bore," she said.



TRODDEN HARD

THREE thousand years or more ago
King Solomon, both sage and bard,
Observed a fact he noted thus:
"The way of the transgressor's hard."

The question why is oft discussed,
But this solution seems complete:
The sinner's way is hard because
It's trodden by so many feet!

WILLIAM B. HILLS.



HAPPY FAMILY

"ARE they a devoted couple?"
"Yes; he's devoted to horses and she to whist."



A STREET-CAR DIALOGUE

HOWELL—Will you change seats with me? The man next to me is a creditor of mine.

POWELL—How much do you owe him?

"Ten dollars."

"Can't do it, old man; I owe him twenty."



AFTER THE WEDDING

MRS. HOLT—Didn't you think the groom looked too foolish for anything?
HOLT—Yes—anything but matrimony.

ON LOVE-LETTERS

By Frank S. Arnett

Who art thou, and what is thy genesis, terrible demon whom men call Love? . . . Its touch alone suffices to destroy the most robust organizations and overthrow the mightiest intellects. Virtue, honor, wealth, reputation and happiness it scatters before it as the tempest blast disperses a handful of withered leaves. Wise men it turns to fools, rich ones to beggars; misers it metamorphoses to spendthrifts, turtle-doves and lambs to rapacious vultures and raging lions, venerable gray-bearded men to childish simpletons, and innocent virgins to Messalinas and Jezebels; causing all sorts and conditions of men to revolve at its bidding in the frenzied mazes of a wild Sabbath dance. Suppress Love, and we shall have banished pain, sorrow, poverty and bloodshed from the face of our globe; suppress Love and we shall have found again the terrestrial paradise.—*The Extermination of Love.*

THE more carefully this doctrine is considered—and, alas! the more reminiscently—the more self-evident become its truths, the more certain becomes one's faith in the prophesied outcome of the experiment. Unfortunately for those that would welcome a high-priestess for the new religion that is to banish love, Madame de Laszowska, who wrote the quoted paragraph, does not herself believe it. She places the doctrine in the mouth of her hero and then, in the end, has him trepanned for the removal of a tumor that pressed upon the brain. Whereupon, coming to himself, he that has spent his life in seeking a serum for inoculation against the curse of love, at once exclaims to the first woman he sees: "How beautiful you are! Kiss me!" Which merely shows that the insane sometimes become less sensible when cured.

Nay, madam, let us adopt the ad-

vice of your hero, given in the days before he realized the beauty of women or longed for the touch of their lips. Let us establish public sanatoriums for this great work; let all civilized governments pass laws for compulsory love-inoculation so that posterity may be saved from this burden of misery. Only—let us be self-sacrificing. Let us start it for the benefit of the next generation. Let them be the first to receive this great blessing—they will not know what they are missing. To us, carrying the before-mentioned burden of misery is like the parting of Shakespeare's most famous sweethearts, the sorrow of which, you will recall, was sufficiently bearable to cause it to be drawn out until the morrow. And so it is better, perhaps, that you and I should bear with love until the time when it must be yielded up with all other earthly things.

You see we have grown rather accustomed to the thing, and to be dragged off to the hospital and forcibly cured of the disease might, at this late day, seriously annoy us. Among the minor results would be, for example, the fact that for all time thereafter we should have to confine ourselves strictly to business, being unacquainted with any other passion. No more theatre-going; we wouldn't have the faintest idea of what Romeo or de Bergerac was talking—or, if we did, it would be an unpleasant reminder of the madness of which we had been cured. Our fiction, too, would have to be confined to the news columns of the daily papers; could we sympathize with the feelings of Rebecca or

Ivanhoe, of Lorna Doone, of Anna Karénina, of Maslova, or even of Jacques Casanova? Not at all. They would become to us merely a set of jibbering idiots—and it's just possible that we would curse the fellow that had cured *us* of jibbering.

No; for the present generation it would not do at all. Of course, when, of necessity, we are quite through with the world, with women, with brains and with breath, we can leave all our money to the founding of hospitals for the cure of love, endow the Watch and Ward Society of Boston with the request that it confiscate and burn all copies of Shakespeare, the Psalms, the Decameron, Browning and the rest—and die convinced that we are benefactors of our race.

Burned, too, must be all the literature of love-letters—the letters of Petrarch and Laura, Dante and Beatrice, George Sand and de Musset, of Michael Angelo, of Franz Liszt, of Margaret Fuller, of the Portuguese nun, of Adah Isaacs Menken. Aye, and all the love-letters that have not become a part of literature, but are locked carefully away in garrets—or, perhaps, nearer at hand. My, what an *auto-da-fé* there will be! And what a bringing together of the written confessions of the most incongruous people!—men and women of genius and men and women touched by the moon; priests and criminals, paupers and millionaires, slaves and emperors—all of them at some time afflicted with the same disease; their letters twirling and crackling in this common dance of flame, flying ablaze into air and falling blackened to ashes—as though possessed of the madness that once, because of love, surged in the minds of their authors.

For the safeguard of posterity they must all go, of course. They would counteract all the good accomplished by the sanatoriums. Count Alessandro Manzoni—he of “*I Promessi Sposi*”—realized the danger of a similar contagion through literature. Explaining the absence of all love scenes from his novels, he said:

One must not speak of love in a way to lead others toward that passion. . . . There will always be a sufficient amount of it in this world; we need not, therefore, take the pains of cultivating it in others, for in cultivating it one only helps to arouse it where it is not wanted. . . . If by a miracle some day I should be inspired with the most eloquent love pages that man has ever written, I should not even take a pen to jot them on paper, so certain am I that I should regret it.

And yet the other day someone published a volume entitled “*Lessons in Love*”! At this rate some day we may have “*How Easiest to Catch Smallpox*”; or, perhaps, “*Guaranteed Methods of Going Insane*.” Still, Manzoni was somewhat needlessly careful. The real danger rests not so much in imaginary love scenes as in the publication of real love-letters—and, incidentally, putting a love-letter into print is an act of the same delicacy and high feeling as is that of bringing a suit for breach of promise; because, as I hope later to convince you, love-letters, besides being a form of microbe, or a sort of silent mosquito carrying the love germ as the noisier one carries that of malaria, are, in fact, preserved and thus made a possible sacrifice to a soulless publisher merely because they represent the ephemeral love of someone dead, lost or faithless. Therefore they are mementoes of what has been, in a sense, a tragedy, and to make public the tragedy of a heart is a crime the law ignores.

In my commonplace-book I find a single quotation hinting at this same interpretation of the preservation of love-letters. It is this:

Types and memorials of past happiness. Relics of bygone hours and days and memories that can never come again save in dreams. How many such there are in the world, thousands upon thousands of time-stained, tear-stained epistles, sad and yet sweet evidences of a love that, passionate as it would seem, had no strength to stand the test of adverse circumstances; of a friendship sealed by many a vow long since broken and forgotten.

Such letters form the unmistakable symptoms of this disease. True, in explaining the absence of any such in the collection made of Hamilton's cor-

respondence, their editor hazarded the guess that "perhaps he never wrote any," although "his annual receipts must have been heavy." Wise Hamilton! He proved that every man's mind does not wander even when the fever is at its height. Or perhaps I am wrong. It may be that none of his fair correspondents died, and, in the case of such a man, he was not likely to find them faithless. For, as I have indicated, regret must embalm the love-letter that is preserved. In a love-affair certainty is a destroying angel.

From what has just been said you will see—although it is odd that even for a moment I should have imagined you do not know it already—that the letters preserved include not only those received, but also, and alas! those sent; those, in fact, that have come back to us. It is also not unworthy of record that, in returning a sometime sweetheart's letters—after the almost inevitable parting—we hold out just one. And not always the right one, either. In this exchange of letters we sometimes make mistakes—particularly in extreme youth; for example, that calm, sisterly and dispassionate letter of hers that you have told her had been torn into a thousand pieces, yet which you mistakenly and absent-mindedly inclosed with the rest when her mother demanded their return.

Probably, therefore—I hope you see the connection—the love-letters he received were burned by Hamilton, following the example of Bassompierre, who thus got rid of some six thousand the day before that on which he knew he was to be arrested and sent by Richelieu to the Bastile. By so much he lightened the labors of the future exterminators of love. And he did a second service; for a love-letter should lose its charm when read by any but the one to whom it is written. It should not even interest any but that one; if it does it "emanates from a poet or a fraud." Of the latter character, for example, was that count of whom Goethe tells us, who throughout each day kept his inventive secretary busy

writing the most passionate letters, and who each evening would select the best, copy it, and send it to his temporary sweetheart. You will agree with me, I hope, in the belief that these were not "really and truly" love-letters.

Indeed, the love-letter, in a stranger's eyes, may go beyond even the fraudulent, the laughable or the ridiculous. Sometimes it may appear even sinful where once it had seemed holy. For instance, some way—you never could remember just how it came about—she has visited you; and you have left her there, with the opportunity of dissecting you by means of your books, your pictures, your pipes and your unfinished manuscript or drawing, or whatever it may be. And, when you return, in the room is a faint, familiar and maddening perfume, and on the table a hastily, tremblingly penciled love-letter—three lines: "The king commands and I obey. But, oh, your majesty, how I hate to go!" And, by the first post on the morrow, arrive other lines—without which tear-stained confirmation you would have thought it all a dream—written you on the very night of the day on which she confessed in those other fright-eloquenced words that you were lord of her soul. These are the real love-letters.

And that is why it goes so hard with a man when it is over—which, some day, it is certain to be. The woman, in her acts and in her written and spoken words, has so made of him a king that when he is hurled from the throne it is as difficult for him to assume the role of an ordinary mortal as for any actual monarch contentedly to fill that of exile. The man cries out in an agony of honesty:

Having been your lover

I cannot stoop to be your friend.

Whereas the woman will meet him without a heart-throb, welcome him at dinner, introduce him to her husband, and apparently think no more of his presence than that of the most commonplace social acquaintance. In her love-letters, and in her conduct after she has ceased to write them, the woman shows herself the actress born.

Sometimes in losing her and in losing her love it is as Anthony Hope has said: there is not "much to lose of what is most easily lost." But usually there is much to lose, and its loss is just as easy, just as certain—and it hurts.

True, men are more brutal in their breaking off of a love correspondence; women more gentle, yet with less of personal feeling. Women hate to give up possession even after they have ceased to care for it. Hence they quit slowly, at first writing at long intervals, occasionally asking a meeting merely to convince themselves they are still supreme, only absence and new conquests finally making them quite fail to desire or to remember. Sometimes the woman is more honest; the man notes the delicate change in her wording, the gradual elimination of the old-time terms of endearment, and is thus not unprepared for her announcement of her marriage. In this case usually she offers him the half-meant assurance of her lifelong friendship. Now few have spoken more accurately than that anonymous writer who said that "the highest mark of esteem a woman can give a man is to ask his friendship; the most signal proof of her indifference is to offer him hers."

But even when she is thus frank—and occasionally she carries it to the extreme of sending us cards for the church ceremony—even then, unfortunately, not all of us a week or so later can say with dear old Dick Swiveller's optimism: "By this time, I should say, the iron has entered into her soul." On the contrary we have a sneaking conviction that she is supremely happy and that our successful rival is really a better fellow than we are; we are afraid his love-letters were more eloquent than ours; and too often we simply cannot deny the fact that he is better looking and has more money.

This frankness is not, however, natural in a woman. Usually it is her silence, not her honesty of words, that tells the man the truth. A woman rarely tells a man she has ceased to love him. She will lie in words even while her every act proclaims the lie.

Men lie from pity; women from egotism. Thus he is likely to be something of a brute when ultimately the man is actually truthful. Nevertheless one marvels that Swift and Gibbon, for example, could have seated themselves cold-bloodedly to write the words they did. The dean, particularly—in his writings the master genius of insult, in his loves the most tragic cur that ever lived.

Sometimes, but not often, we realize, as Swift and Gibbon did not, the idiocy of it all, or appreciate the disease from which we suffer. In that case, why do we cultivate the cursed contagion, why do we preserve the evidences of our derangement—these epistolary poisons that have aggravated our malady? As I have already pointed out, we do so only when the letters are those of the dead, the lost or the faithless. Said George Moore in "Mike Fletcher"—but this was when he was more truthfully epigrammatic and less rabidly Celtic: "You cannot desire what you possess." That, briefly, is the keynote of the whole symphony of unburned love-letters. The scarcity of real love-letters preserved in literature is due to the fact that the majority of men destroy these epistles when they marry the writers, or when they are about to die if they happen not to have married them—which generally they don't. It may be admitted, in passing, that marriage is sometimes a partial substitute for a perfect cure for love. In it, those that have been thus afflicted change from violent insanity to mere melancholia—which is less strenuous for the patient and less of a nuisance to the public.

It is because of the ultimate realization of this idiocy—this hypocrisy it sometimes is—or because they have become legal or otherwise actual possessors, that men have destroyed these mementoes. Until quite recently the most famous letters in literature have not been, therefore, those of love; or, if so, merely of love used as a basis for literary gaiety, gossip, epigram and extravagance. The mention of a

half-dozen, perhaps the greatest letter-writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, will indicate the character of this particular class.

The Marquise de Sévigné, picturing with life and charm the society of her time; the Marquise du Deffand, "the wittiest woman who ever lived," frank, bold, fascinating the most brilliant men of all Europe, holding her splendid salon during thirty years of blindness in the Convent of St. Joseph, desiring love and gaining only a mental supremacy, yet writing Horace Walpole during their "intellectual flirtation": "I renounce my errors and am absolutely persuaded that of all illusions that (of friendship) is the most dangerous. You who are the apostle of this wise doctrine, receive my confession and my vows never to love, never to seek to be loved by anyone."

The letters of Walpole himself should, perhaps, head the list, "fiddles singing all through them," as Thackeray has said. "Wax lights, fine dresses, fine jokes, fine equipages, glitter and sparkle there; never was such a brilliant, jiggling, smirking Vanity Fair as that through which he leads us"—no real love, no heart, just wit and foppery, just the fascinating dawdle of the busiest of idlers.

Ranking with Walpole's are the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "representative of the weakness and strength of that age of light without sweetness," in whom was summed up "the eighteenth century masquerading as a woman"—a century that would "sacrifice the ten commandments to an epigram."

Nearer the subject, yet not quite of it, are the letters of Madame D'Arblay, sincere, gossipy, interesting; and those of Madame de la Live d'Épinay—to Grimm, Diderot and Rousseau—showing a desire for the intellectual in the hope that it might drown the hopelessness of the marital.

In none of these do we find evidence that the writers had actually been infected with the disease. Frequently they clearly show its absence, yet at least in the letters of the Marquise du

Deffand and of Madame de la Live d'Épinay the unsatisfied love of love is evinced—a strange and almost fatal form of the malady. It must be remembered, however, that the period in which these fair women at last gave up the struggle was decidedly cold-blooded. Even the language of love was forgotten in worship of so-called pure reason and common sense. Listen to John Tweddell writing to his sweetheart, Isabel Gunning:

To the exercise of the social affections and the peaceful habits of domestic life, I look as to the foundations of my comfort and the limit of my wishes. Those beings alone appear to me to be really happy who under the tranquil convictions of a benevolent Providence spend their lives in improving their minds and in exercising their virtues.

There's a passionate letter for you! Mr. Tweddell, at least, had no need of inoculation for the cure of love. And just imagine writing in that strain to a cousin of the incomparable, "the beautiful Gunnings"! If Isabel was satisfied with that sort of thing, then I should have preferred the heartless Montagu as a sweetheart; for Talleyrand, who should have known better, never made a greater error than when he said: "One must have loved a woman of genius in order to comprehend what happiness there is in loving a fool."

For solace let us go back another century, to a period when a love-letter *was* a love-letter. Gallant John Spottiswood, devoted follower of the Marquis of Montrose, thus wrote in 1646 to a certain Lady Janet:

They say loving has gone out of fashion, sweetheart; then I am sure that neither you nor I can be in the fashion. For surely, if love be out of fashion, kissing must likewise be; and that that was a kiss you gave me when you took leave of me (and sad leave it was, sweetheart!) both my mouth and thine will testify. Your lips trembled, sweet, and the tears stood in your eyes, and yet I loved that gentle quivering better far than even the brightest smile you ever gave me when first I saw you, sweetheart, ah, so long ago.

Nothing wonderful? Oh, not at all. It only shows that, three hundred years and more ago, brave, true men

wrote love-letters almost identical with those that are written today. It is almost a pity to reflect that, had these two lived to marry, their disease would have been acted upon by an automatic, self-regulating soothing syrup known as the disillusion of possession.

We rather sympathize with these love-letters of the long ago; yet, while it is supposed that all the world loves a lover, as a general rule all the world laughs at a love-letter—unless it is from or to oneself. Outwardly, that is, not in secret. In secret we strive to read between the lines, to find thoughts the lovers concealed even from themselves.

Yet, despite this public show of mirth, there has been in the last few years a craze for the publication of love-letters. Even fictional ones have mounted to the proud position of "best sellers." Read any or all if you wish—that is, all but one. If you're not to join the League for the Extermination of Love, if you wish to sleep with the conviction that any good is left in women, even in the woman you love, then do not read Max Nordau's "Comedy of Sentiment." In the end of it all the man finds her letters to another. The postmarks show the dates. "He read them—there were the same intoxicating words which he knew so well, which she had also written to him on the same days, probably on the same hours."

And from this what does the hero benefit? The knowledge that "all the words, movements and acts, which apparently only the most ardent love inspires, can be feigned"; the realization that doubt as to the truth of all love is "the greatest impoverishment which any human heart can endure"; and the conviction that "a sensible man ought to tell himself that he must necessarily be the dupe if he plays a comedy of sentiment with a woman, for in that she is always his superior." Somewhat axiomatic and well-known truths, are they not, to be learned at the cost of a ruined life?

But this was fiction; the photo-

graphic accuracy makes one forget. Let us then look at the real love-letters with which of late the book-shops have been crowded. Chief among these have been those of the Brownings, the Carlyles, of Victor Hugo, Bismarck, Goethe, Balzac, Margaret Fuller, Dorothy Osborne, Mademoiselle Lespinasse, of de Maupassant and Marie Bashkirtseff, Napoleon and Josephine, Benjamin Constant and Madame Récamier. Now these dozen sets of letters represent almost as many phases of the disease, and yet a diagnosis of several will show us that all indicate the one universal result.

When Marie Bashkirtseff found the epistles of Guy de Maupassant growing longer and more longing, did she not candidly write: "At your fifth letter I was chilled. . . . Satiety?"

Yes, at an abnormally early stage, the fever here having abated without even reaching the customary "crisis." When he wrote again, asking an appointment with his unknown correspondent and promising that on the morrow she could say, "Adieu, monsieur"—she responded not a line. When a woman allows a man to have the last word, even when the man has never been seen, the satiety of certainty has reached its apotheosis.

Again, the love-letters of Mademoiselle Julie de Lespinasse, letters M. Sainte-Beuve pronounced "a series of immortal paintings and testimonies of passion"—the resemblance of which to Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Lady Rose's Daughter" created a quite unnecessary sensation—were first published by Madame de Guibert. I have only to remind you that it was to the husband of Madame de Guibert these letters were addressed in order to show you a phenomenon of the disease, the satiety of possession in this case being so profound that even jealousy found no place. It is also not unworthy of passing mention that the letters were warmly praised by Madame de Staël, whose first lover had been this same favored M. de Guibert. If you will not admit that love is either a contagious disease or a form of insanity, you

may be further comforted by the proof offered by these facts that, of whatsoever sort, it is at least a decidedly ephemeral affliction. Supposing it, on the other hand, to be a disease, it is unfortunate that no one can ever hope to become immune.

How seldom, when we have the love-letters as evidence, is there room for doubt as to the seldom confessed truth. How this duel between passion and possession is pictured, for example, in the letters of Napoleon to Josephine! How they show the man's love waxing because he knew her to be faithless, and the woman's waning because she knew his love to be, with all his faithlessness, her own! Listen to these extracts from his letters from Italy, the letters of a man we have been accustomed to imagine as an imperial ravisher rather than as a suppliant wooer:

My life is a perpetual nightmare. A presentiment of ill oppresses me. I see you no longer. I have lost more than life, more than happiness, I am almost without hope. I hasten to send a courier to you. He will stay in Paris only four hours and then bring me your reply.

Ever since I have known you I worship you more every day. . . . Ah! pray let me see some of your faults; be less beautiful, less gracious, less tender, and, especially, less kind; above all never weep; your tears madden me, fire my blood. Be sure that it is no longer possible for me to have a thought except for you, or an idea of which you shall not be the judge.

Humiliated, driven to despair though he was by her utter indifference, he throughout life remained her friend—in a sense, indeed, her lover. Even in divorcing her he did not offer as excuse the crime with which a hundred times he might have charged her, giving, indeed, a cause unflattering to himself. And yet, for nearly a century the world has believed him a heartless husband, her a faithful, heart-broken wife.

Love-letters are, however, not unlike statistics: by quoting them you can prove almost anything. And so it is only fair to speak of Dorothy Osborne, who, after looking at the subject in the most hopeful light, was the great exception, she whose beauty of soul made her to Temple "in fact, as well as in name, the gift of God." But doubtless more typical was the famous actress who continued impartially to write letters "to the faithful lover whom she never loved and to the faithless lover whom she always loved." In her was shown the character evolved by the "real thing" in the way of a man's love, the love that makes us idiots, causing us to do and write just the things that make the woman turn to the other fellow—the fellow that does not do or write them simply because he is not in love. If, when you have recovered, you could minutely analyze the mental condition you have experienced, you would find it had been not unlike that of the opium fiend—and, if you have ever experienced that, you know how close it is to insanity.

Love is beautiful at times, but so, at certain stages, is consumption. Unlike consumption, it is seldom fatal. No Christian Science is needed to prove to us that it is based upon the non-existent, a dream, a desire.

And yet—and yet—

Must I, then, with bathos as the peroration of all my eloquence, translate, roughly, from *Les Étangs*?

After all, is not a dream the daily bread of existence? Is not life really hope incessantly renewed? Is not each moment of the day a desire, a longing, a fiction? Strip reality of this efflorescence and what remains? Reality is nothing but a pretense for life. That which is, is but the narrow stone touched by our feet that we may spring to that which is not.



PRUDENCE

SHE—Oh, you may be quite candid with me.

HE—Well, to be quite candid, I think I'd better not.

A NEST OF HEPATICAS

O PASSION of the coming of the spring!
 When the light love has captured everything,
 When all the winter of the year's dry prose
 Is rhymed to rapture, rhythmed to the rose,
 When all the heart's desire is fondly set
 Just to remember never to forget;
 O season of the mild and misty eves,
 With the deep sky seen through the growing leaves!
 Where in the crocus west the evening star
 Grows distant from the moon, and sinks afar
 As she grows lovelier; when the willow wands
 Burst their brown buds in gray and gleaming bands,
 And score the surface of the amber pool
 With little motes of silver beautiful;
 When the hepatica, with her flushing crest,
 Blooms in the leaves above the secret nest,
 Where all her sisters, fairer far than she,
 Lie curled in a frail silken galaxy:
 Like a young girl's first, timid thought of love
 That blossoms in her liquid eyes, above
 A nest of hopes so secret and so fair
 She hardly knows herself that they are there.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.



AN UNFRIENDLY OPINION

FREDDIE—What's a connoisseur, dad?
 COBWIGGER—He's a fellow who gives more for a second-hand article than
 he would have to pay for a new one.



A FEAT

BROWNE—Was that clairvoyant any good?
 LOWNE—Yes; he predicted what would be the cost of a five-thousand-
 dollar cottage when finished.

BIFFKINS OF BOOLOO

By Ethel Sigsbee Small

YOU never heard about him?
Really? Well, it's time you did.

One summer, when Glenda and I were twelve, Mrs. Wilderson got nervous prostration and the doctor said if she didn't get away from her family she'd die. It isn't that her family are horrid or cruel or anything of that sort, but they do make a good deal of noise. Bernice sings and has beaux, and Glenda has her acting—and some of the parts call for shrieks; then Alonso is a boy, which is the same as saying he is a wild Indian, and Mr. Wilderson writes speeches and practices saying them to a looking-glass; besides which the cook, Muriel, has fits. So, you see, it isn't exactly what you would call a peaceful household.

So when the doctor ordered her away from everybody, she went, and admitted that the quiet would be delightful; and the family said good-bye and admitted that it would be rather refreshing to be able to sing and act and slide down the banisters and make speeches without being told to "S—sh!" So it was a very pleasant arrangement all around.

After Mrs. Wilderson had gone, Mr. Wilderson used to go to the office almost every night and not come in till early in the morning. Glenda has the room next to his, and she said he worked so hard that he would toss and moan in his sleep and talk about some man named Jack Potts who evidently hadn't been very kind to him. Finally he got all used up with so much hard work and so little sleep, and went down into the country to fish. He didn't go into the same country with Mrs.

Wilderson, but I guess that was because he would have made speeches to the fishes and disturbed her.

Well, in about a week Bernice went off to visit a chum of hers, and then Alonso got so bad and was so saucy to Glenda that when he said he was going to Dick Jones's house and stay with him till his mother got back, Glenda just let him. Dick Jones is a terribly bad boy—Mrs. Wilderson doesn't allow Alonso to play with him—but then, so is Alonso, so I don't see why they shouldn't go together.

That left only Glenda in the house, and Muriel the cook, and Betty the chambermaid. Glenda said she was afraid and lonely, and wanted me to come up and stay with her. Mama said that she never knew anything as irresponsible and unsettled as the Wilderson household at any time, but now she thought they were all crazy.

"The idea of leaving Glenda alone with that epileptic cook and a housegirl who hasn't sense enough not to wear a pompadour! And I don't believe Mrs. Wilderson has any more nervous prostration than I have," she said. Still, she let me go. I think it was because I listened to her so nicely.

Mama gave me a long list of directions of what I was to do and what I wasn't to do, and there was such a lot of the things I wasn't to do that I began to think maybe I'd better not go because I could sit still and fold my hands at home. Then she said she would come up and see us every afternoon, and that she would expect us to come and see her every morning. I sort of got out of the notion of going,

somehow. However, I went, and the day after Aunt Lou, papa's sister, got ill and mama left to visit her. She told Florence to take her place and go often to see me and remind me to go to bed early and take a bath every Wednesday and Saturday. But Florence had other things to think about. My, Glenda and I had fun!

We went to bed some nights as late as twelve, and some nights as early as seven, but we never got up till eleven. Then we had strawberry preserves for breakfast and coffee and pickles, and for luncheon cocoa and chocolate cake and pickles, and for dinner pickles and a few other things. We wore our prettiest dresses in the morning and didn't wear our ugly dresses at all. Those were heavenly days! I think even the servants enjoyed them. Betty wore the biggest pompadour she ever had, and stuck a red bow right in the middle of it, and in the evening her friends would come to see her—and she certainly was a popular girl, even Bernice never had so many men—and sing and dance and have fine little suppers. That was why we had so much cake and pickles and stuff. Betty kept it always on hand for her guests. Even old Muriel put on her best waist occasionally and joined Betty in her innocent revels. I told Glenda that I thought Mrs. Wilderson wouldn't have so much trouble with servants if she would let Glenda keep house all the time. And Glenda said her mother was always objecting to their having little harmless amusements like these, and that, between ourselves, she thought she was really the cause of Muriel's fits. It really looked like it, because she didn't have one all the time we were there.

Of course Glenda and I did other things besides eat and sleep. We passed some days dressed up in Mrs. Wilderson's clothes, and then sometimes we'd forget we had them on and they would get in our way terribly when we slid down the banisters or pulled taffy. There were some right pretty clothes there when I first came.

Mrs. Wilderson hadn't taken anything to the country except her wrapper and a walking-suit, by the doctor's orders, so we had plenty of things to choose from. But after awhile we got so we didn't care for any of them. They didn't seem to have much wear to them.

Then sometimes we played bookstore with all the books in the house, and jewelry-store with all Mrs. Wilderson's jewelry, and had jams of fun. But after awhile the books got so sort of under things, and the jewelry scattered itself about so, we couldn't get enough together to make any kind of store with. Still, there were plenty of other things to do, such as rearranging the rooms and getting all sorts of queer effects, and changing the positions of the different pictures, and one afternoon we had a perfectly glorious time walking on the keys of the piano in our bare toes. Did you ever do it? It feels awfully funny and tickly. You ought to try it. And sometimes, when you slip, you really make some very fine music—like Wagner. Glenda wanted to write it down, but she gave it up, it was so complicated.

Yes, those were golden times. There was only one thing that fell like a shadow on the joyous sunshine of our days. We were afraid of burglars. You see, the servants slept way upstairs, and our room was on the second floor. All around us were vacant rooms—Bernice's, Alonso's, Mrs. Wilderson's and Mr. Wilderson's, and Mr. Wilderson's little study. And I don't think there's anything, anyway, as scary as vacant rooms, do you? We used to get awful scared some nights, when it was windy and things creaked, so finally I invented a burglar-alarm.

The burglar-alarm was very complicated and hard to arrange. We put it against the door leading out into the garden, because Mr. Wilderson had said once that that door ought to have a bolt, and everybody had agreed with him and nobody had got one. First we balanced a dishpan on top of some small tin plates, then came several

glass bowls and tumblers, because glass breaking makes a fine big noise, and last of all a great silver bell. It was really a very fine burglar-alarm. Glenda said I ought to have it patented. I don't think it made us much happier, though, because we were always imagining what we would do if it ever *did* sound, and we both decided we shouldn't do anything, but just die quietly where we lay. One night we had a confused dream of a crashing, splintering noise and screams, but we were sleepy and couldn't rouse ourselves, and it was not until the next morning that Betty told us the burglar-alarm had gone off. Betty said she had shut her eyes very tight and screamed very loud. We were grateful to Betty for screaming—which I am sure was brave of her—and more grateful to her for not waking us. I don't think we could have been induced to spend another night alone in that house after that, but we didn't have to; the next day our guest came.

Glenda and I were sitting on the back piazza playing jewelry-store when a shadow fell across the porch, and there was a man standing on the bottom step.

"Good morning," said Glenda. "Are you looking for someone?"

"Is your mama in?" asked the man.

"No, she's away," said Glenda.

"Then I'll just ask you to call your papa," said the man.

"He's away, too," said Glenda.

The man didn't look at all surprised, but smiled in a contented sort of way.

"Betty and Muriel, the servants, are in. Did you come to see them?" asked Glenda.

"Well, no—no," said the man. Then he took off his hat and rubbed his hair. "This sun's hot," he said; "maybe I might come up and sit down if anybody asked me."

"Why, yes, come up," said Glenda.

We were both sort of puzzled. The man had quite a handsome face, but his clothes were shabby. We didn't know quite whether he was a gentleman or not. At first we had thought he wasn't, but we weren't sure; and

Glenda remembered the time when her father's cousin came from the West and she sent him around to the back door and how furious her father was, so she decided it wouldn't do any harm to be polite to this one.

The man sat down and looked at us and at the jewelry we had arranged in little boxes on the floor.

"I guess papa will be sorry to miss you," Glenda said when it seemed time to say something.

"Yes, I guess he will," said the man, and sort of chuckled.

When he said that, Glenda decided he was a friend or relative of her father's, so she got right up and put out her hand.

"I'm very glad to know you," she said. "Are you a cousin of papa's? This is my friend, Susan Roley."

"Delighted, Miss Roley," said the man. "No, I'm not a cousin of your papa's, but he'd know me if he heard of me—I'm well known."

"He knows lots of well-known people," said Glenda politely. "He knows the President and he knows an English lord and a real stage-manager."

"Don't he know anybody bigger'n them?" asked the man in a scornful way.

"Why, the stage-manager is the biggest man I ever saw," said Glenda.

"Ever hear him speak of Prince Biffkins?" said the man.

"I don't believe I ever did," said Glenda politely.

"*You've* heard of Prince Biffkins, though, haven't you?"

"I'm afraid I haven't," stammered Glenda.

"And you go to school?"

"In the winter—yes, I do," said Glenda, getting very red. "What is Prince Biffkins prince of?"

"Booloo Land," said the man.

He sat very quiet after that, and Glenda and I said, "Oh, yes," to show that we knew where Booloo Land was—though I'm ashamed to say we didn't.

"Booloo Land by-the-sea," the man went on in a dreamy voice. "Prince of Booloo Land, and now—look at me!"

We looked at him. There wasn't much to see—just a plain, everyday man with shiny clothes.

"Me, that was prince, has come to this," said the man. "A exile, a stranger in a strange land—that's what I am."

A sudden light flared up in Glenda and me. We gazed at each other, and then at the man, as if we saw him for the first time.

"Are you Prince Biffkins?" we asked, almost in a whisper.

"Of Booloo Land," said the man.

And then he took off his hat and bowed. "Prince Biffkins, of Booloo Land by-the-sea."

Glenda and I read each other's minds. We were both thinking, "And we asked him if he came to see the servants!" Our faces got like fire, and Glenda said:

"I hope you'll excuse me for thinking you wanted to see the servants. You see—I didn't—that is——"

"Lord, that's all right," said the man. "Ain't it what I meet with every day? It's the same everywhere—insult and abuse and nothing more. Do people know I'm Prince Biffkins? No! And why! 'Cause they expect a prince to wear silk clothes. And my silk clothes is all in Booloo Land."

"I think your clothes are very nice," said Glenda. But they weren't; she only said it to please him.

"I'm a exile," said the man, "a exile and a wanderer; but in my own land, d'you suppose I'd be like this—d'you suppose I'd be wearing things like these? . . . But I don't cherish hard feelings; if people knew who I was it would be different. They don't know I'm Prince Biffkins."

"We know you are Prince Biffkins," said Glenda and I together.

"That's white of you to say it, but what can you do for me? No, I'm just a exile—a poor, hopeless exile—of blood royal."

Glenda's face had been growing pinker and pinker, and now she stammered out:

"Papa isn't home, but if you'll let me help you——"

"Could you give me a night's lodging?" said the prince. He said it so quickly and eagerly it made us jump.

"Everything is dreadfully upset"—Glenda was redder than a rose—"but if you think you could be comfortable we'd *love* to have you stay; we'd do all we could to make you happy. But I'm afraid it won't be like your own palace."

"That's all right," said the man; "it's been so long since I slept in a palace I've most forgot palace ways."

"If mama was only home," said Glenda. "Somehow, everything seems neater and nicer when mama's home."

"It's just as well mama ain't home. You see, I don't want to let on who I am to too many people. Us princes can't do like other folks. You are nice little girls, and I'll take that lodgin'. Put me up anywheres, just so it's cool. You haven't got a dog, have you?"

"No," said Glenda. "Do you like dogs? We might get——"

"No," said the man, "don't bother. I hate to put people to trouble. I'll worry along without a dog, somehow."

Then Glenda asked the prince to come in, and we all walked to the door. We weren't sure whether we ought to go ahead and walk backward or not, but he didn't seem to expect it, so we didn't. At the door the prince stopped suddenly.

"Look here, what you goin' to tell those girls of yours?"

"What girls?" said Glenda.

"Your help."

"Oh," said Glenda, "you mean the maids. Why, I'm going to tell them that you're Prince Biffkins."

The prince knit his brows.

"No," he said, "I'm afraid it won't do. Tell 'em I'm your cousin."

"But you are not my cousin," said Glenda.

The prince looked disappointed. "Oh, well, tell 'em I'm Prince Biffkins," he said.

We led the prince into the parlor and asked him to wait there for a little while till we saw about his room. We were awfully mortified at the parlor. There were paper dolls and books all

over the floor and dust an inch thick, because Betty had said dusting made her back ache. We apologized for it and said we hoped he would try to overlook it, and he said he would. He was very polite, the prince was. Sometimes he did queer things and he certainly did talk oddly, but then he was a foreigner, you see, and you can't expect foreigners to do what you do.

Well, after we left the prince in the parlor we went out in the hall and fell into each other's arms.

"A *prince!*" said Glenda.

"A real, live prince," I said, and we giggled for joy; but suddenly our faces grew serious. We felt the responsibility of our position. Ours was no ordinary guest; we would have much to do to make his stay pleasant. We called Betty.

"Betty," Glenda said, "Prince Biffkins is here, and he's going to pay us a visit."

"Prince which?" said Betty.

"Biffkins," said Glenda, "and you must fix mama's room for him, because it's the prettiest, and courtesy when you speak to him—and, oh, Betty, I wish you had dusted the parlor!"

"Which is that, that's comin'?" said Betty. And we had to tell her everything all over again.

Well, if I do say it, Mrs. Wilderson's room after we got through with it was worthy of *any* prince. It is a lovely room, anyway, with beautiful, blue, satiny paper and a big brass bed and dark mahogany chairs and a dear little inlaid table. We had Betty make the bed, and for a wonder she didn't grumble. You see, she realized the seriousness of having a prince in the house, too. We put the best hem-stitched sheets on the bed and Mrs. Wilderson's new blankets that had never been used, and the dotted Swiss bed-cover over blue silk. Then Glenda cut all the flowers on the place and heaped them everywhere about the room. It smelled like a garden. Mrs. Wilderson had taken all her silver toilet things with her, so Glenda brought hers and spread them out on the toilet-

table. I wanted to give up something to the prince, too, so I looked through my trunk and found some violet water and a box of baby powder.

Then we went down to the parlor to call the prince. He wasn't there, but when he heard us he came hurrying in.

"I'm learning my ways round," he said; "I always learn my ways round when I get to a strange castle. This here ain't quite like the castles I've been accustomed to. Maybe you'd show me round." So we showed him round.

We had a lovely dinner that night. The table looked *sweet!* We got out all the silver and the cut-glass and Mrs. Wilderson's pond-lily centrepiece that she never uses, it's so beautiful. The prince sat at Glenda's right and I sat across from him, and we all had on our best clothes and looked lovely; that is, all but the prince. You see, his nice clothes were home in Booloo Land. But we were very polite and didn't notice that his coat was ripped and that he hadn't any cuffs.

The prince acted rather queer at first. He kept looking round the room in an odd, jerky way, as if he expected something to happen. Then, once, when a door banged, he jumped right up and said—but I won't say what he said; it was *awful*. The prince explained afterward. He said it wasn't what we thought; that in Booloo it meant something entirely different and not anywhere near as bad. However, after the soup had gone and the roast beef come in, he seemed to feel happier and began to take an interest in what he ate. In fact, he took the most interest of anyone I ever saw. It was wonderful.

Then, at dessert, Glenda remembered something and jumped up and came back with some of her father's claret. Glenda said that she knew it was awfully old, because she had heard her father say so, and she was terribly sorry they hadn't any better. The prince replied gallantly that it didn't make a particle of difference. And it didn't seem to. He drank it all.

After dinner he asked where Glen-

da's papa kept his wines, and Glenda showed him the little cupboard in Mr. Wilderson's study and where he kept the key. We left him alone in the study after that, because I have heard my parents say you oughtn't to force yourself upon a guest. The prince was awfully red in the face when we got back, and he didn't seem to speak English as well as he had before. He got quite excited, too, and waved his arms around and talked about the dog's life he led and how no one showed a man in his profession any consideration, and then he almost cried when he told us how good we had been to him and how much he liked us. Finally, at ten o'clock, we showed him to his room, and the last thing we saw of him that night he was sprawled across the dotted Swiss and blue silk bed-cover with all his clothes on, sound asleep.

"Miss Glenda," said Betty the next morning, "how long is that hungry loafer goin' to stay here?"

Glenda and I were eating breakfast—the prince was still asleep—and Glenda turned a terrible face on Betty.

"Betty," she said, "don't you dare to call Prince Biffkins that again."

"Prince Sniffkins—nothin'!" said Betty. "He ain't no prince, and Muriel, she says so too."

"He is a prince," said Glenda. "Leave the room, Betty."

"And I'm thinkin' that I ought to write to your mama as how a common tramp-man is sleepin' in her bed," said Betty.

"Leave the room, Betty," said Glenda.

"And eatin' her victuals," said Betty.

"Leave the— Oh, Betty, please don't!" said Glenda, almost crying. "If you tell her *stories* about the prince, of course she'll object."

"I'm thinkin' that I'll write to her," said Betty stubbornly.

An inspiration came to Glenda. "If you do," she said, "I'll write her and tell about your parties and your beaux!"

Betty sort of flopped into herself at that.

"I was only foolin'," she said. "I ain't goin' to write to your mama. Shall I go wake the duke?"

"Yes, you may wake him," said Glenda.

We went on with breakfast and had got as far as our third cup of chocolate when Betty came running in, white as a sheet.

"He's gone!" she cried.

"Who's gone?"

"That rapscaillon—the prince!"

We tore upstairs. We couldn't believe it. I felt the way I did when I broke my first doll, and Glenda felt the same way. We simply couldn't *bear* to believe our prince had gone. But he had. There wasn't a sign of him—at least there were a good many signs, for the room was terribly tumbled, but there was no prince.

"What could we have done?" Glenda cried, and we racked our brains. We were so afraid we had offended him.

"It was that claret," I said at last; "you know it *was* old."

Glenda nodded. She was too full of tears to speak.

Just then I saw something on the little desk by the window. It was a piece of Mrs. Wilderson's monogrammed notepaper scrawled all over in a shaky, raggedy hand. Glenda saw it, too.

"You may go, Betty," said Glenda, and Betty went out moaning and saying something about a thief. She was a queer girl, Betty. You'd have thought she would be thinking of no one but the prince at a time like that. Glenda and I opened the letter and with our heads together read:

TO THE TWO LITTLE KIDS:

this is to say that i am forsed to leve in a hurry cause i got a wireless Tellygram that my Affairs in booloo Land needed me bad and i didnt want to wake you so i stole out easy i seed the Jim Cranks on the buro was marked glenda so i didnt bother em You was as prety behaved Kids as I ever seed and its a Dern shame but that aint bizness If you ever come to booloo Land i will entertane you royal same as you did Me i thanks you sinsear for your hospitalty as i have reeson to beleive i will live high in Future

yours respectfull

BIFKINS OF BOOLOO

It was really a beautiful letter, we thought, all except the spelling and the writing and blots and finger-marks and punctuation, but the thoughts were beautiful. We were so relieved to know it had been business and not the claret or anything we had done that had sent him away, and we were so glad that he had gone to be a prince again that we felt almost happy, even though we had lost him. We were still reading the letter when Betty came tearing in.

She said all the silver had gone except the breakfast things she had left in the kitchen overnight, and all Mrs. Wilderson's jewelry and the ornaments in the parlor, and Mr. Wilderson's clothes, and the cut-glass, and— But perhaps it would be easier to tell what *hadn't* gone. The parlor clock hadn't gone, and the kitchen chairs and an old rake.

We were horrified. To think a burglar had been in the house and we hadn't known it! Glenda grew very white and I sat down hard on the prince's bed. We simply couldn't speak for awhile; then at last Glenda opened her lips.

"If the prince had only not gone," said Glenda.

"Huh?" said Betty.

"He'd have killed the burglar!" cried Glenda.

Then Betty said a terrible thing.

"Don't you know *yet* who stole everything? Don't you know it was that lyin' king? What'd he skip for?"

We said we could tell her, and showed her the letter. But do you know the stupid girl persisted in her foolish theory? However, she was only a servant, and it didn't matter. But that night, when Mr. and Mrs. Wilderson and all the family came home—we wrote for them—they *all thought what Betty thought!*

It seems incredible that such injustice could be in a Christian land. Here we had the prince's letter to *prove* it, and they yet refused to see. Those were cruel days—the cruelest in our young lives, perhaps. All Brown-town rang with the story of the prince and the robbery, and everyone held the poor prince responsible. For the first time we were ashamed of our native land.

The detective asked us to describe the prince, and when we did it and told him what lovely eyes the prince had and made the most we could of every feature, the detective said:

"Pete Larry, beyond a doubt, by George!"

Poor Prince Biffkins! We knew how his proud blood would boil could he hear himself confused with a common criminal.

The detectives tried to catch the prince, but they couldn't. How could they? Only we knew where he was, and you can just believe we didn't tell.

So finally the affair died down and Mrs. Wilderson stopped wailing about her jewels and her bed having been used by a burglar; and Mr. Wilderson got new clothes, and they gave a silver-shower and got jams of new silver, and Glenda and I were allowed to play together again.

We never forgot the prince. We have his letter still, all framed in a little gold frame Napoleon's picture used to be in; and Glenda keeps it for one week and I keep it the next, and so on. We are proud to say we knew him, that poor, downtrodden, misunderstood but royal prince, and if he should ever come to the house again Glenda and I know exactly what we're going to do—first bow, the way they do to princes on the stage, and then open the door wide and ask him in.



CASPER—I hear that poor old Broadway fell off the water-wagon.
JUMPUPPE—Yes, but he fell so hard that he bounced up again.

ON THE HILLTOP

By Madison Cawein

I

THERE is no inspiration in the view.
 From where this acorn drops its thimbles brown
 The landscape stretches like a shaggy frown;
 The wrinkled hills hang haggard and harsh of hue;
 Above them hollows the heaven's stony blue,
 Like a dull thought that haunts some sleep-dazed clown
 Plodding his homeward way; and, whispering down,
 The dead leaves dance, a sear and shelterless crew.
 Let the sick day stagger unto its close,
 Sullen and mumbling, like a wretched crone
 Beneath her fagots—huddled fogs that soon
 Shall flare the windy west with ashen glows,
 Like some deep, dying hearth; and let the lone
 Night come at last—night, and its withered moon.

II

The wind is rising and the leaves are swept
 Wildly before it; hundreds on hundreds fall
 Huddling beneath the trees; with brag and brawl
 Of storm the day is grown a tavern, kept
 Of madness, where, with mantles torn and ripped
 Of flying leaves that beat above it all,
 The wild winds fight; and, like some half-spent ball,
 The acorn stings the rout; and, silver-stripped,
 The milkweed-pod winks an exhausted lamp.
 Now, in his coat of tatters dark that streams,
 The ragged rain sweeps stormily this way,
 With all his clamorous followers—clouds that camp
 Around the hearthstone of the west, where gleams
 The last chill flame of the expiring day.



THE TYRANT DETHRONED

MRS. GRAMERCY—Are you glad the cook is going to leave?
 MRS. PARK—For one reason. I can now say to her the things I've
 been wishing to say ever since she's been here.

BESSIE AND MISS GREY

By W. J. B. Moses

OF course, if one had made up his mind—as Knowles seldom did—and if one were perfectly serious in his intentions and whole-heartedly devoted to their carrying out—as Knowles never was—one would not make love to Miss Grey in the same way that one would make love to Bessie. With Bessie one would look for moonlit nooks where hands might come into unintentional contact, and where in due time kisses and caresses might follow, as it were by accident, so naturally that they would excite no wonder and little thought, while sometimes a mutual declaration of love, in irrevocable words, would be borne in on a wave of passionate tenderness.

But with Miss Grey, no doubt the declaration must come before the kisses; and probably even then there would be little of passion or tenderness about them. In her case there would be presents of flowers and books, long and erudite conversations, polite little attentions distinguished by a delicate flavor of intimacy, a thorough canvassing of each other's tastes, ideals, theories of life—coming to a climax, perhaps, with those concerning love and marriage—and then a grave and serious statement of one's affection and a plain proposal of marriage. Once engaged, kisses would not be altogether out of the question, but the idea of kissing the calm, stately, well-bred young woman in the same way in which one would kiss brown-eyed Bessie was absurd. In the latter case the first kiss would demand an infinite repetition, while in the former one would do for a reasonable time.

Thinking something of this kind, but without naming Bessie definitely to himself, Knowles allowed the month of Miss Grey's residence to slip away without in any way becoming a confessed lover.

Never in his life had he been more contentedly happy than during the long hours of their intimate association—the days of luxuriant idleness in the woods, the evenings of quiet talk on Mrs. Sanford's porch, with neutral little Miss Clarence as a negligible chaperon. Yet with all their intellectual intimacy Knowles felt an impersonality in their relations that persisted to the day of her departure, and deterred him subtly from any show of the interest he honestly felt in the real woman.

In the reaction from his disappointment and loneliness, Bessie, not the less ready for a little attention because she had been so completely ignored, fell under his notice, and he found excuses for being frequently in her company. He did not see her every day, as he had seen Miss Grey for the last two weeks of her stay, but he began to form the habit of taking his Sunday afternoon stroll in the direction of the Mason cottage.

Sometimes he sat on the lawn and talked to the little girl, sometimes walked with her along the wooded shore of Lake Winona, or, if the weather were not suitable, sat in the "parlor," and looked patiently at the photographs which Mrs. Mason showed him. Then he would recompense himself for that trial by a two hours' contemplation of Bessie's charms.

Mrs. Mason was rather too cordial in welcoming these weekly calls—

May 1905—97

so cordial that Knowles rather disliked her; but he felt at the same time that Bessie, though she seemed glad to see him, as a rule was not to be accused of unmaidenly boldness in seeking to attract him.

On that Sunday when Mrs. Sanford informed him of Miss Grey's return, he thought for a time that he would not go to see Bessie. But the anticipation of Miss Grey's coming, combined with the lack of customary occupation, made him so restless that he did go at last and invited the young girl to walk with him. The walk was not a very interesting one, for Knowles was very silent and preoccupied.

They found a mossy bank on the edge of the lake and spent more than an hour there, Bessie, for the most part, looking at her shoes, and Knowles looking sometimes at her, sometimes out across the lake.

He was almost certain in his own mind that Bessie loved him, and that certainty disturbed him. He thought she would have been glad if he had seated himself close beside her and put his arm about her. This he was determined not to do, and though he restrained himself he placed no bonds on his imagination, but allowed it to present such a course of action in its most enticing colors.

When at last it came time to go, Knowles was still sitting apart from Bessie, wondering if he were not a fool for not improving his chance of kissing those pretty red lips, and then lauding himself for that strength of character which kept him from yielding to what he considered a temptation. Once away from Bessie he felt very well satisfied with himself. He knew that he could meet Miss Grey the next afternoon with a clear conscience and a sense of triumphant virtue.

Restless as ever that evening, he went for another walk by the lakeside, alone, and stumbled accidentally upon a pair of lovers. They were both youthful this time, and before Knowles could make his presence known he found that the girl was Bessie and

that she and the boy with her were talking about him.

They were walking toward him, and he thought it would be kinder to step into the shadow and let them pass by. Instead of passing, however, they stopped within arm's reach of him.

Then Knowles learned several things not altogether complimentary to himself. It was rather a shock at first, but before Bessie and the boy were ready to go and give him an opportunity to escape, he had managed to reconcile himself to the fact that Bessie considered him very slow, stupid and troublesome; that she was polite to him only because her mother desired it; that she hated him and hoped she would never see him again. And even more she confessed, urged on by the jealous questioning of the boy.

In the meantime, the electric atmosphere of love was perceptible in the air, and the youthful couple billed and cooed with an abandon that was rather disgusting to the unwilling witness. He was philosopher enough to submit gracefully to this rude awakening, and since Miss Grey was coming it was perhaps rather a relief to feel himself free from all responsibility in Bessie's case.

The next day he saw Miss Grey. She greeted him most cordially and as if she had been looking forward to seeing him quite as much as Mrs. Sanford herself.

Almost at once relations were established on the footing of the previous summer, except that there was now no Miss Clarence to make a third in their rambles. Knowles had felt some hesitation at first as to whether Miss Grey would not think it improper to wander about the woodland and lake shore unchaperoned, but she seemed to see nothing unusual in it; and although he had been prepared to bribe Mrs. Sanford into taking the place of Miss Clarence, had that been necessary, he saw no reason to suggest such a course.

In the beginning he was pleased

with this state of affairs; then he began to realize that in not objecting to these solitary rambles Miss Grey was proving somewhat different from the Miss Grey who had won his worship because she was a woman of the highest ideals and strictest, sternest code of life.

And yet, after all, it was nothing. But again he had begun to feel a little less afraid of Miss Grey's opinion of things. At first he had been careful about disagreeing with her, for he felt unformed and uninformed by her side. He wore his knowledge as he wore his clothes, in a rather ungainly manner, while she, in this respect, displayed that refinement of taste which is doubly commendable in a woman. Always aware of his own carelessness in matters of detail, and always fearful lest the more precise-minded should think meanly of his ability, he was invariably diffident before people of culture. So he had felt with Miss Grey. But now he saw that in many things he had little to fear. Her knowledge of German and French was far greater than his, it is true, but he could read these languages with a facility that was marvelous in her eyes. He was an indifferent student of Italian, Spanish, Danish and Bohemian—languages with which she was almost wholly unacquainted. She knew what it was necessary to know concerning art and music, and could carry on a drawing-room conversation very well; but when it came to any deeper survey of such subjects she was confessedly not very competent. Philosophy and literature she was better prepared to discuss, but in these, too, Knowles found that he was her superior.

Because she knew what she should know, and because she had the *savoir faire* which Knowles so noticeably lacked, he had been inclined, at first, to creep before her; but as he came to understand more perfectly all the crooks and turnings of her mind and all the limits of her knowledge and of her intellect, he began to stand upright, to increase in stature, to look down upon her.

But it was not until about a week before the time set for her departure that the more rapid descent of this ideal woman began. They had been walking in the woods and had sat down upon a log to rest. In seating himself Knowles's hand fell, absolutely without intention on his part, in such a way that it rested upon the log in close contact with Miss Grey's fingers. And she did not move.

Although he had begun to think less of her intellect, no suspicion that he had been mistaken in his estimate of her standard of propriety had crossed his mind; but now, advancing from that first contact of hands to other caresses, he found with something of a shock that Miss Grey was susceptible to the kind of love-making that he had formerly associated with his thoughts of Bessie.

Once the ice was broken they babbled along brightly for a time, exchanging kisses and gentle caresses with as good grace as if they had been fifteen instead of thirty; but all the time Knowles was thinking strange thoughts. Had she taken his actions as a serious declaration of love? Was he not now bound to make a verbal proposal of marriage? Did she not consider it an engagement already? He did not believe that she had ever allowed another man to kiss her in that way. Although she was far older than Bessie, he felt certain that she loved him with the unselfishness and purity of a young girl's first ardor. And he did not believe that he himself really did love her at all, now.

The few remaining days passed swiftly away without a change in the cordiality of the relations between them and without one definite word of love-making. If Miss Grey was disturbed because Knowles had failed to speak she did not betray the fact. Perhaps she trusted that the mutual caresses were sufficient proposal and sufficient acceptance.

Then came the morning that she was to leave. Knowles drove his trap out from the village and took her to

the station. At sheltered places on the road he did not hesitate to exchange kisses with her, but he said nothing which might commit him.

After he had procured her ticket and seen to her baggage, they walked slowly up and down the platform together, threading their way between the trunks and boxes and the groups of traveling men, draymen, barefoot boys and other loungers, talking very little and about indifferent subjects only.

Knowles was still debating with himself whether he should ask her to marry him, or if not that, whether he should say something about writing to her when the distance should separate them. He came to no conclusion. The smoke of the incoming train was seen. There was the usual bustle and running to and fro, seizing of hand-bags and crowding toward the edge of the platform.

The train whistled. Knowles and Miss Grey joined the waiting crowd in silence. He held in his hand her umbrella and bag. The train came rushing in and stopped. Passengers crowded off, pushing back those who wished to get aboard. There was a confused sound of greeting, and a clamor of the 'bus-drivers and hotel runners.

"Now, then," said the brakeman, as the last passenger descended, allowing the impatient traveling men to climb aboard.

Knowles and Miss Grey were the last of the crowd. He helped her aboard, found her chair for her and turned to meet her eyes, still only half decided in favor of silence. So far she had shown no trace of emotion

that he could discover, but all at once she seemed to break down. She placed a trembling hand on his arm as he bent over the seat. Her quiet blue eyes were brimming with slow tears.

"All aboard!" cried the conductor, and the train began to move almost imperceptibly.

"I think you have been very cruel to me," she whispered.

"Good-bye!" he said, conscious chiefly of the rapidly increasing movement of the train. He rushed through the aisle and jumped from the car just in time not to miss the platform.

For a moment he stood, collecting his thoughts; then, with sudden resolution, he hurried into the office and asked for a telegraph blank. He scribbled rapidly and handed the message to the sour-visaged, one-armed agent. It read:

For Miss Grey, Parlor Car, Train 3. Will you marry me?

KNOWLES.

As the agent ticked off the message, Knowles walked savagely about the room, which was now vacant. He knew it would be from twenty minutes to half an hour that he must wait. All the time he paced restlessly back and forth.

At last the taciturn agent came to the window and beckoned. Knowles looked eagerly at the man for some token that would tell him the nature of the reply, but he saw no shadow of expression or interest. He tore open the yellow envelope which was handed him and read:

MR. CLEMENT KNOWLES: No.

MARGARET GREY.



THE OTHERS DECLINED

MADGE—I wonder why Charlie said I was not like other girls?
MARJORIE—He said that because you had accepted him.

THE MOTOR ADVENTURES OF LADY SIBYL

BEING AN IDYL OF SAINT SYROL'S DAY

By Zona Gale

LORD BURKELY CHEVELTON and his wife, Lady Mary, never knew all the story. And in Burkely Manor House, in Sussex, the portrait of Lady Sibyl, their eldest daughter, adorns a row of patrician ladies of Chevelton, to whom the affair would have been manifestly impossible. But the ladies of Chevelton were not so fortunate as to spend any autumn of their well-ordered lives in America on Long Island, in the neighborhood of Wolstanbury Hill.

Lady Sibyl was twenty-four when it happened, although she was only just at the end of her first London season; for a year of mourning for her brother and two years on the Continent in search of Lady Mary's health, and a year in India as the guest of the wife of the viceroy had fallen in admirably with a natural aversion to the occupation of a season in town.

"Not that Sibyl is not frivolous," Lord Burkely Chevelton was wont to muse defensively. "Sibyl is finely frivolous. But she dislikes frivolity as a profession. I'm afraid she will never marry."

The irrelevancy of his last clause bade fair to be both justified and discountenanced, however, when shortly after Lady Sibyl had been presented, the young Marquis of Winnesdale paid ardent court to her. The young marquis was penniless, none too settled in demeanor and an undoubted genius in oils, and the Cheveltons were in a panic—all but Lady Sibyl. She was amused and she was frankly kind to the marquis. She was not, however, so perfectly amused as to resent a suspi-

ciously timely invitation from her sister Pamela to spend that autumn with her in America. If she secretly smiled at Lady Mary's sudden certainty that Pamela needed her, she made no comment; indeed, since the runaway marriage of Pamela, Lord Chevelton's second daughter, with Harvey Queenborough, the young American millionaire whose sole disqualification was that he was the flower of no great family-tree, Lady Sibyl had been eager to visit her sister, so that the project was a welcome one.

Early, therefore, in a peculiarly amber-and-russet October, Lady Sibyl Chevelton set foot on American soil, and the day after her arrival she was deep in a bewildering survey of her sister's Long Island country place. She looked with frank amazement at the great stone palace, the bountiful acres, the woods, the rose gardens, the stables and kennels of the Queenborough domain, and she uttered her abiding decision.

"Pamela," she said gravely, "England is heaven, but this is Nirvana. Already I feel the fine independence of the dead."

Harvey Queenborough looked in duty bound to take offense.

"Don't bandy words," begged Lady Sibyl in her rich voice, half contralto, half accent; "I could have found it in my heart to die daily to find liberty. The only place that an unmarried Englishwoman can occupy without a chaperon is the grave. But here I find a premature independence in America. Rejoice with me!"

A week after her arrival Lady Sibyl

was walking one evening on the terrace, looking so like the conventional princess that Harvey Queenborough, as he joined her, pleasantly called her a cartoon. Her white frock was trailing; Rex, the longest and leanest of the greyhounds, was lounging beside her, and the peacocks were crying discordantly at her approach.

"No," replied Lady Sibyl, "I would not have been a terrace-and-turret kind of princess, with a white peacock in every room. I would have been a hunting princess, with doublet and hose and a green cloak."

"And what would you have hunted?" demanded Pamela, with a matronly hand on the skirts of two little Queenboroughs who balanced on the edge of the fountain. "A good golf course, to judge by your present tastes."

Little Mrs. Queenborough was twenty-two, and she deliciously embodied the superiority of all young wifehood, in proof of which she had developed a fascinating line between her eyes.

Lady Sibyl shook her head. "No," she said, "something—I don't know—something I've never had. There must be something in the world for women—our kind of women—that we never get. We all want it—it's the thing we dreamed about when we were eighteen. I can't remember what it was, and you can't. What was it?"

There was one guest at Queenborough Place that evening; he sat throwing sticks at the frogs in the fountain and listening with a little crooked smile that threw his features delightfully out of proportion. Mr. Headly Madder was above forty, without occupation, and he was a privileged person, which always means that people are privileged good-naturedly to browbeat one as much as they please. He looked up quietly now.

"I know," he said to Lady Sibyl.

"You know?" she repeated incredulously. "What I dreamed about when I was eighteen?"

"Headly has made everything a study," said Pamela. "He prescribes for Rex and recommends sunshades to me with the same unfailing instinct."

"You see," explained Mr. Madder imperturbably, "you constantly want something incongruous. Women love to breathe the atmosphere of another age. That's what makes them love romance—for romance is only an echo of King Arthur and mythology; in other words, a survival of what never was."

Queenborough laughed immoderately. "Bachelor," he commented, "oh, bachelor!"

"That is exactly why women like to be athletic," went on Mr. Madder. "The incongruity of a perfectly matter-of-fact woman getting out and grotesquely chasing a ball over a course or a net pleases their sense of the fantastic. And it isn't motoring that delights them—it is the spectacle of a big red car that Nero or Justinian might have ridden in, buzzing through crowds of lesser folk who are concerned with commonplace pursuits. Women of imagination are creatures of all time, Lady Sibyl, and, being fallen by accident upon the evil days of the twentieth century, their chief concern is to get away. So they spend life in pretending, and they dream or motor or lecture as their temperament demands."

Lady Sibyl leaned against a moon-dial set near the fountain so that its faint shadow should be cast on the starry water. About its edge grew a tangle of late blossoms; she held up one of the pallid flowers with wind-torn edges and fastened it in her hair.

"At this moment," she admitted, "I would like to be a mermaid, with a bonnet of water-flowers. What would you suggest?" She put it to Mr. Madder with sudden seriousness.

He shook his head, looking at Lady Sibyl in delight. She was like one of the lesser angels when she asked for advice.

"I don't know," he confessed ruefully, "but if I were a woman, I'd find a way."

"You disappoint me," pouted Lady Sibyl; "women are always being decorated with generalizations instead of fed with suggestions. Why don't you tell me to go and put bubbles in my

hair and dance in the south wood all night? You aren't practical."

Queenborough rose. "Pamela," he said, with mock severity, "who is this Lady Sibyl whom you are passing as your sister?—for anyone less like the accepted British maid I have never seen."

"I must be like her, though," said Lady Sibyl gloomily, "or I'd rebel. We're all alike. We've all forgotten what we used to dream at eighteen."

Pamela, idling toward the house with a sleepy little Queenborough on either side, smiled over her shoulder.

"Don't mind her, Headly," she said. "Sibyl is the most conventional creature alive, really. She never leaves an obligation to a bore unpaid."

"That is the kind," opined Mr. Madder shrewdly, "in whose hearts you'll find the biggest revolt going on. The women who concede the most to society are the ones who most long to 'get away.'"

"Then they are only rag-doll rebels," said Lady Sibyl, "or some time they would—'get away.'"

A little while later Queenborough, with an air of restrained triumph, walked into the drawing-room where they were assembled.

"The new car has come," he announced.

"Really, Harvey?" cried Pamela delightedly. "Are the cushions the right shade?"

Her husband's bright smile vanished. "After three years of matrimony," he said, "I have succeeded in inducing Pamela not to judge a horse by the jockey's shirt, or a golf-player by the cut of his knickerbockers. But her one idea of an auto is still the color of the cushions. Will you all come for a day's run tomorrow?" he finished. "I'll take a holiday. Pamela, we'll take the children. Headly, you know you will? And it shall be Lady Sibyl's party."

Mr. Madder shook his head.

"The Windemeres ride tomorrow," he said.

"I'd forgotten," said Queenborough. "The Bruce and Medora are still lame,

and Lady Sibyl's mare hasn't arrived yet. That's the greater reason for our drowning our sorrow in Westchester County, as a family."

"Oh, Harvey," mourned Pamela, "the Cross-country Needlework Guild meets here tomorrow, and I've got to give them luncheon. Wait till next day."

"Directors' meeting that day," said her husband. "No, it will have to be tomorrow. Lady Sibyl, will you go?"

Lady Sibyl did not at once answer. The evening papers lay in her lap, and her eye had been caught by a certain name in the passenger list of the *Ten-tonic*.

"Other arrivals," the paragraph ran, "were the members of the Forestry Commission and the Marquis of Winnesdale, whose pictures at the Academy," etc.

"Oh," said Lady Sibyl suddenly, "I'm so glad!"

"I thought you'd be," said Queenborough genially; and then, as she looked up startled, he added: "You shall run the car yourself, because you're company."

"Really!" cried Lady Sibyl, and her sudden animation was most gratifying to Queenborough.

"Poor Mr. Madder," said Pamela, noticing nothing, "that's what you get for being M.F.H., you see."

"You'll have a great day of it," consented Mr. Madder, his eyes following Lady Sibyl admiringly as she went to the piano.

Lady Sibyl struck the first wild, disjointed chord of "Peer Gynt" and wheeled suddenly on the stool. It was not so much, she should have admitted, that the Earl of Winnesdale had actually arrived as that his caring to come was somehow a new element in her new freedom.

"This isn't London, this isn't London," sang Lady Sibyl rejoicingly, like a child. "Oh, what a lot of the world there is that isn't London!"

When Queenborough came to his wife's sitting-room that night to share the little supper that was invariably

spread for them, Pamela confided an anxiety.

"Harvey," she said, "you know that legend in our family that one of its women disappears every generation?"

"Yes," said Queenborough, lighting the alcohol lamp, "and don't you attempt it."

"There was Lady Geraldine," went on Pamela, "who disappeared from the ball the night before Waterloo; and Lady Fens, who was never seen after somebody's coronation ball. Harvey, I sometimes think that Sibyl——"

"Nonsense," said Queenborough lightly.

"Well, you heard what she said about putting bubbles in her hair and dancing in the south wood," said Pamela.

"My dear Pamela," cried Queenborough, "you'd far better send that Cross-country Needlework Guild packing tomorrow, and come with us. You need a change!"

"I can perfectly imagine her doing it, anyway," said Pamela, with determination.

It was not yet ten o'clock when Lady Sibyl, clad in a long gray coat that might never disown its Parisian birth, stepped out on the terrace in answer to the splendid, throaty greeting of the new car. On her head she wore no cap at all, but a great white veil covered her face and hair and was tied in an enormous bow beneath her chin.

Queenborough raised his eyebrows. "Didn't Pamela's cap do?" he inquired tentatively.

"We don't wear them," disclaimed Lady Sibyl simply. "It's in the by-laws of our country club. Only veils—and you've no idea how much better it is, or you'd adopt it."

"But you'll have to go the whole length of Fifth avenue and the Park," suggested Pamela doubtfully.

"Delightful!" replied Lady Sibyl evenly as Queenborough handed her in.

The new car was a signal success. The run to Long Island City in the fresh autumn morning, with Lady

Sibyl guiding the machine, was accomplished gratifyingly clear of the old record, and they dashed on the ferry as the bell sounded, and sat with tingling cheeks over which the full-scented fall winds had been rushing. On the New York side, at his station by the cross-town car terminals, stood Queenborough's office-boy, morning mail in hand, patiently waiting, as usual, to take the car to the garage while Queenborough went downtown on the Elevated.

Tibby, the boy, was that type of metropolitan, Bowery-born and office-bred, who has become man-about-town and citizen of the world, and who knows his New York as he knows his ball-score, while curiously retaining a certain childlikeness of manner and an unmistakable Bowery accent. But Tibby, besides all this, was a delicate little lad, with great eyes, who was given to hanging out the window by the water-cooler when his colleagues were betting pennies at the ticker. Lady Sibyl watched him compassionately as, in response to Queenborough's nod, he clambered into the tonneau and waited, his big eyes patiently fixed on the Elevated track. Queenborough recalled her by a sudden exclamation.

"By Jove," he said, "this is too bad. Special meeting of the board at noon today—and I can't get out of going. Why the deuce didn't they wire me?" he asked irritably.

"Did, sir," said Tibby briefly; "hour ago."

Queenborough thought a moment, looking perplexedly at Lady Sibyl, hatless, with her great veil.

"You can't go home by train alone in those togs," he said decidedly. "Look here, you shall not lose your run, Lady Sibyl, that's all there is about it. I'll telephone my chauffeur. Tibby, you may run the car up to the stable as usual, and Charles will take it on up the country and then back home. No use to wait for me—I can't tell when I shall be free. Do you mind, Lady Sibyl?"

Suspicion of a faint sparkle lighted Lady Sibyl's eyes as she threw deep

regret into her reply that she did not mind.

"May I keep the boy with me, too?" she asked on a sudden impulse.

"Why, if you would feel safer," assented Queenborough.

Lady Sibyl noted the fire of hope and gratitude in the lad's eyes.

So it was arranged. Queenborough took the Elevated, with a regretful backward look at his new toy, and Lady Sibyl set off on her journey with Tibby at the helm. Just before they reached Fifth avenue they passed a fruit-stand, and at her command the lad willingly got down and returned with both hands laden.

"Now," commanded Lady Sibyl quietly, "you may sit in the tonneau; I shall run the machine the rest of the way."

Tibby regarded her for a moment with uncertain eyes. But as the great machine obeyed her hand and rounded the corner, and threaded its unwavering way up the crowded Avenue, he doubted no longer, and his respect for Lady Sibyl became monumental. After all, he reflected, it was only a few blocks up to the garage, in Forty-third street, where Queenborough's chauffeur would await them.

The slim gray figure, with its distinctive head-covering, attracted considerable attention as the car puffed up the Avenue. No one recognized the new motor as Queenborough's; few had seen Lady Sibyl before. By the time Lady Sibyl and her one little passenger reached Forty-third street a trail of conjecture, of which she was supremely unconscious, was drifting behind her.

"Nex' corner to de left is de stable," volunteered Tibby.

Lady Sibyl, with her eye undeviatingly on the course, spoke in an even voice.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you," she said, "that I don't intend going to the stable at all. I wish to make the run alone. I shall go up the Avenue and through the Park, and after that you will direct the course, please, to some inn where we can lunch."

Tibby stared uncomprehendingly at the erect, girlish figure that had already sped the car well beyond the street of the stables.

"But Mr. Queenborough, ma'am—" began Tibby, aghast.

"Mr Queenborough would wish you to do as I say, Tibby," Lady Sibyl reminded him pleasantly.

A slow grin overspread the boy's face, and he said something under his breath which the car drowned.

Into the golden wilderness of the Park they plunged presently, and then Lady Sibyl drew breath. She was now fairly embarked upon her enterprise, and the long day stretched invitingly before her. It was not yet noon, this whole alien world of which she had suddenly become a part was smiling and singing about her, the hoarse call of every passing motor was like a greeting and a challenge, and here was she, Sibyl Chevelton, roving at large in America, accompanied only by a smiling boy bribed to doubtful acquiescence by chestnuts and apples. Besides, though the item was not given official recognition in her mind, there was undoubtedly the pleasantly exciting memory of the *Teutonic's* passenger list.

"Hully gee!" said Tibby ecstatically, "don't it smell good?"

And "Oh, this," thought Lady Sibyl a little wistfully, "is almost like what I used to dream about when I was eighteen. Perhaps, if I go far enough, I shall meet my dream!"

II

THE open road which, after half an hour's progress, Tibby indicated, showed a bewildering length of colored branches and fair shadows. Some laborers in a field were whistling briskly, a thin cloud or two was driven lightly abroad by the crisp wind that broke over Lady Sibyl's face, bringing scent of unseen presses and far bonfires.

Presently the road dipped past a high orchard wall, and from a gate in

the wall, set just opposite an alluring branch road of haze and red leaves, there suddenly emerged a grotesque little figure which the car, though dexterously avoiding, evidently threw into a panic. She was a plump little old lady, with ruddy face and bobbing curls and a pudgy reticule, and she shrank aside in such helpless terror that Lady Sibyl impulsively brought the car to a stop and looked back. She saw the little old lady sitting weakly by the roadside, mechanically straightening her bonnet. Instantly Lady Sibyl sprang to the ground and, followed closely by Tibby, hurried back to her. To their surprise, upon their approach and before they could speak, the old lady looked up gravely and addressed them.

"Do you happen to know," she said, with some severity, "whether there is a wood near here where one could get lost?"

One advantage in being the daughter of a hundred earls is that one is natively able to meet them all, walking ghostly with their coffin shoes in their hands, and betray no great surprise. Perhaps, too, it was that the wine of the morning was running in Lady Sibyl's veins so that, as it always is with a happy few, nothing delightful seemed unreal.

Lady Sibyl looked about her. "A wood to get lost in!" she repeated musingly.

"Yes, indeed. What else?" demanded the old lady crossly. "Our Lady knows that this is the first holiday I have had in twenty years, and I mean to get lost as far as ever I can. I've cakes enough with me."

Lady Sibyl considered, frowning regretfully at her helplessness. It was a part of her code to give assistance without question of values; she would no more have questioned the old lady's reasons for getting lost than have inquired the errand itself of a more commonplace seeker.

"I'm afraid I *don't* know," she said at last apologetically, and then she remembered Tibby, who stood by, staring.

"Tibby," she said briskly, "you know the road. Can you suggest a wood where this lady can get lost?"

A long and checkered office career had made of Tibby as stern a thoroughbred as could any ancestry. Like a cab-driver and a man of the world, Tibby seldom showed amazement. His defection at the moment of Lady Sibyl's capture of the car was long a source of mortal chagrin.

"Sure," he recommended briefly. "Lady Birch Grove. Two mile up. Solid woods from dere to Medford."

"For the love of heaven!" exclaimed the old lady irritably. "Two miles! I can't go so far. A body can't even get lost nowadays without money to travel."

"Oh," cried Lady Sibyl, brightening, "we'll take you. Will you come with us? We'll take you to the grove, if you like."

The old lady looked doubtfully at the car.

"I don't know but I might as well," she said musingly. "The Lord'll probably come in a bigger, noisier chariot than that. Our Lady knows I live to be prepared."

Lady Sibyl and Tibby helped the little creature to rise, settled her comfortably in the tonneau, and the journey was resumed. At once their passenger gave a brief account of herself.

"I've lived here," she said angrily, untying the ribbons of her reticule, "for forty years. Where else, I'd like to know? And in all that time they have never given me a holiday—not one. They thought I wouldn't notice, but I did. I kept count. And I remembered every day the way the woods smelled, and when it came bonfire time I wonder I didn't go crazy. And at last, this morning, when I found the mallowberries ripe, I took some cakes and went through the orchard. I want to be lost. It is never a real holiday until you're lost. Do you travel far?"

"We don't know," answered Lady Sibyl truthfully. "Some distance, probably. The truth is," she added mis-

chievously, "we're looking for a dream—the sort of dream we used to have."

Lady Sibyl glanced merrily at Tibby. To her delight his face was one substantial wreath of smiles, not derisive nor abashed, as a boy's smiles are wont to be, but plainly sympathetic. As for the little old lady, she nodded as simply as if Lady Sibyl had announced herself to be upon an expedition to purchase late pippins.

"Aye," she said comprehendingly, "but they're hard to find—the dreams we used to have."

Far from being alarmed by the swift flight of the car, the old lady was apparently soothed and so successfully that when Lady Sibyl next addressed her she was perplexed to find her fast asleep. So occupied was Lady Sibyl in wondering what to do when the Grove of the Lady Birches should at last be reached that she did not notice, until she was almost upon him, a man who advanced toward them, waving his cap to attract attention. Lady Sibyl touched the brake, and the car rolled to a standstill before him. He was a well-knit, square-shouldered, youngish man, whose face was boyish in spite of the tinge of gray at the temples, and the charm of his deference was very great.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "have you an extra tire-valve?" He indicated his own car in dry-dock under a linden just ahead.

Lady Sibyl appealed to Tibby with a glance.

"Search me, sir," said Tibby to the man; "we ain't been out wid dis car before. Wait awhile."

He climbed over the back of the seat, not to disturb the still slumbering guest, rummaged among the tools and emerged red-faced, while the man waited patiently and Lady Sibyl gazed tranquilly over the salt marshes.

"Nope," announced Tibby comprehensively. "Gimme a look at de wheel," he added, with importance.

Lady Sibyl glanced with some annoyance at the boy, but the gratitude of the stranger was evident, and when Tibby regretfully announced his ina-

bility to be of use without a new valve, the man bowed cheerfully to them both.

"I thought so," he said serenely. "I am greatly obliged."

Whereupon, with a reticently bestowed coin to Tibby and another charmingly impersonal bow to Lady Sibyl, he leaped into the shady tonneau of his own machine, took a book from his pocket and composedly opened it. Lady Sibyl, her hand on the lever, hesitated.

"What will he do?" she asked of Tibby in a low tone.

"Set still, I reckon," hazarded Tibby.

Lady Sibyl glanced at their sleeping guest, at the empty seat beside her and then at the young man, already absorbed in his book under the linden.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said impulsively; "we would be very glad to set you down at the next village, where you can get help."

Lady Sibyl was abashed at her own audacity; yet it would have been both godly and modern for the Good Samaritan to have failed to distinguish in beneficiaries on the road to Jericho. The young man was on the ground in an instant, advancing to her side. He seemed, however, in no haste to avail himself of her suggestion.

"I don't know," he said doubtfully, scanning first the smiling sky, then the singing fields and then Lady Sibyl's pretty, grave face. "I really came out hoping for a break-down."

He was so engagingly grave that it was impossible to take him seriously.

"I wanted," he explained, "to enjoy the fields and the open road, and when I motor I see nothing but macadam and asphalt. I was really relieved at the accident. But I was obliged to satisfy my conscience by inquiring, once, for a tire-valve. That being denied me, I am now free to enjoy my book and the fields at will."

"Pray pardon me," said Lady Sibyl coldly, and was starting the car when the man raised his hand.

"Please," he said penitently, "forgive me. I really wish more than anything in the world to be taken to the

next village. You are exceedingly kind and I am very rude, though what I have told you is the truth." He hesitated a moment. "I beg your pardon," he added; "may I ask whether you intended lunching there—at the Sign of the Spotted Leopard?"

Lady Sibyl deferred to Tibby.

"—“Yep,” replied the lad briefly.

"Then," said the stranger modestly, "perhaps I may make a further suggestion. The Sign of the Spotted Leopard went, the day before yesterday, into a receiver's hands, and there isn't a sandwich fit to eat in the whole place."

Lady Sibyl frowned. "How annoying!" she said impulsively. "I'm very hungry."

The stranger bowed. "If you will allow me," he said, "my hampers. They are well filled. I would be happy if you would honor me. A short distance over the hill lies the Grove of the Lady Birches. We can, if you will, and if madam is willing"—with a glance at the sleeping passenger in the tonneau—"take a hasty luncheon there by Lady Birch spring."

He waited expectantly for her reply, with the little deferential stooping of the shoulders with which his words had been accompanied. Lady Sibyl hesitated. The road was empty, the road was long and lay white in the mild heat of high noon. She was very hungry. To lunch from strange hampers in the Grove of the Lady Birches by Lady Birch spring! It sounded very alluring. Besides, the little old lady was bound for the same grove, and it was, in a measure, necessary to see her through her adventure. A little dimple crept and lurked in Lady Sibyl's cheek and was banished, but her eyes unwillingly gave consent, even before her formal and hesitant words. It was the mad thing, the impossible thing, but it was Lady Sibyl's first day of freedom, and it tasted sweet and as if the wine of autumn were mingled in it. With Tibby's help the hampers were transferred from the stranger's car to her own, the stranger himself took his seat, and together the four adventurers moved forward, the plump

little old lady still drooping, undisturbed, in the tonneau.

Like a great, colored room, brown-mossed under foot, with a sky-blue curtain patterned in gorgeous lemon and white and opal overhead, stretched, silent and spicy-breathed and warm with noon, the Wood of the Silver Birches. It was a room upheld by silver columns down which the sun wantoned caressingly, painting this pale pillar a rich amber, touching that one with delicate traceries and arabesques of shadow and warm color. Into its pungent depth, when the little old lady had been effectually awakened, went the four strangely met companions. The stranger walked before, laden with a great wicker hamper that seemed bursting with delicate spoil. Lady Sibyl followed with the plump little old lady leaning on her arm, exclaiming delightedly at every step that this was a wood in which one might be lost and *never* have to be dressed for company. Tibby brought up the rear with a basket on one arm and a sealed tin of ice under the other. So they took their course over crackling fern for a quarter of a mile or more.

Lady Sibyl was exultant. The strangeness of the whole experience, its absolute impossibility when viewed from any standpoint of her life or her friends, the freedom and delicious irrationality of the unexpected occasion were like a song in her ears. Far down the road over which they had just come lay the discarded thought of the passenger list of the *Teutonic*.

At last, where the branches twisted most ravishingly overhead, their guide paused and set down his burden. Almost at Lady Sibyl's feet, from among gray-green rocks buried in brown fern, bubbled and sang a little spring that took its bright way through fallen leaves in a very riot of delight that it was not yet winter and that its own joy was as yet unconfined. Here the stranger gravely produced a card and offered it to Lady Sibyl. She read:

Mr. Philip Winchell Maverick
which, if denominative, was not explanatory.

"I am Sibyl Chevelton," she returned simply, and turned in some hesitation to the little old woman, who divined her difficulty.

"You may call me," said the little old woman, "Lady Imogen. It is not my name," she added truthfully, "but I have always thought it a very pretty name, and I don't know any better time to adopt it."

"One should certainly have a new name and a new age when one goes in the woods," assented Lady Sibyl. "And this is Tibby," she added.

Maverick gave Tibby a tablecloth.

"Quite right," he said. "Lady Imogen," he begged, "will you kindly select the spot where this is to be laid?"

"Lady Imogen" found an open, grassy place at a little distance, and there she spread the cloth and laid the serviettes while Lady Sibyl and Maverick unpacked the hampers.

"And I," said Maverick gravely, handing a brace of cold birds, "was mourning only this morning that I could not ride at adventure in the green wood, Miss Chevelton."

"Were you, really?" asked Lady Sibyl, laughing a little in sheer delight at what he had called her. "I lament it every day. But you made this adventure."

"No," said Maverick gravely, "this adventure is the gift of Saint Syrol."

"Saint Syrol?" repeated Lady Sibyl wonderingly. "That sounds like a prince, not like a saint."

"I will tell you who Saint Syrol is, since you don't know him," said Maverick. "Will you make the salad dressing, or shall I? You will? Thank you. Saint Syrol," he finished, dashing the tender heads of lettuce in the spring, "is the guardian angel of all who worship the Magic Adventures."

Lady Sibyl, pouring a velvet stream of oil on the crimson vinegar, looked up enchanted.

"The Magic Adventures'?" she repeated lingeringly.

Maverick nodded, delighting in her delight.

"The Magic Adventures," he explained, "are the adventures that lie

close to everyday adventures—just as all magic lies close to everyday affairs. For example, it is not necessarily the man who climbs a mountain or shoots a tiger or gets lost in a jungle who has an adventure. It is the man who does those things, thinking meanwhile not so much about mountain-climbing and the habits of tigers and the vegetation of the jungles as of the magic of all three."

"Oh, I know, I know!" said Lady Sibyl. "And Saint Syrol?"

"Saint Syrol," went on Maverick, diving repeatedly into the deep hamper, "spent his life proving the converse of this proposition. That is, that it is not the people who stay at home and indulge in pastimes and know books who get the magic of life—but rather the people who see the adventure in everything. Consequently he spent his life in the four walls of his garden, and there had the most marvelous and delightful experiences—with shadows and little leaves and kinds of wind and flowers-in-the-dark, and buds that ring like bells in the moonlight, and a harp played in the dark of a garden, and fruit gathered with the dew on it and eaten with certain spices. And he anointed his eyes with secret herbs and simples, and he saw wonderful things. And before he died he wrote of all these in 'The Booke of Magic Adventures.'"

Lady Sibyl, with idle hands, sat listening.

"Oh," she cried, "how wonderful! How wonderful!"

Maverick smiled appreciatively. "Today is the good old man's birthday," said he, "and it is called Saint Syrol's day, though few celebrate it. But it falls out that on this day the hearts of all true believers, whether they know about the saint or not, are wonderfully stirred. And they are seized with a desire to go out and find magic."

Lady Sibyl looked away in the dim silver of the woods at her right, and though she would have spoken she fell silent, with the wonder of it all. Far down a white avenue she saw Tibby,

rapt, and, he thought, unobserved, stealing about from curly trunk to trunk, chewing strange spicy compounds whose properties did not concern him, his ink-stained hands filled with sweet-smelling stems, and she saw him suddenly lie at full length on the springing sod, kicking up his shabby heels luxuriously, hat off, head pressed deep in the rustling colored leaves.

She looked away to the open space where the white cloth glimmered ready for the feast, and she saw the little old lady, her shawl thrown aside, her bonnet slipped back, standing close to a great tree and looking up, up to the distracting depths of pure blue, the wind fanning her white curls, a half-eaten cake in her ungloved hand, a little smile on her lips. Nearby Maverick was distributing sandwiches, on wooden plates, and on a rock lay his book, green-covered, promisingly plump—"The Booke of Magic Adventures"! Why, these three, whom by all the canons of good sense and by all the code of her world she ought not to be with on these terms—these three were more perfectly of her world than—the rows of portrait ladies in Burkely Manor, or even than Pamela herself! The full tide of the joy of things, that inner joy that comes not in the doing, or the having, or even the knowing of anything in the world, but rather in the *being* of something akin to all gracious aspects, the full entering into and abiding among the homeliest beauty of outdoor living, suddenly possessed and mastered Lady Sibyl, and she burst into a glad little snatch of song for the pure bliss of the moment, for the pure gratitude of being one of those to whom the Hidden Magic has been revealed.

"Are we all ready?" cried Maverick.

In a few minutes luncheon was spread, and "Lady Imogen," throned at the table's head, laid aside her cake for more substantial delights.

"Oh," she cried suddenly, angry tears welling to her eyes, "think of me! Forty years without a holiday! I knew I should remember how the

woods smelled if I could find them. But am I really lost?" she inquired in sudden alarm.

"I am," said Lady Sibyl happily, "and so you must be."

"Hully gee," said Tibby, lingering—but not perceptibly—over a leg of cold squab. "De odder fellers'll never believe it!"

Lady Sibyl looked across at Maverick.

"'The Booke of Magic Adventures'!" she repeated. "I'm afraid I'll never believe it either, afterward."

"And I'm afraid," said Maverick slowly, "that I'll never forget it."

After luncheon the hampers were briskly repacked, and "Lady Imogen," laboring in the belief that she was vastly helpful, hurried about like a girl, scattering crumbs for the birds over every available rock.

"For runaway birds, you know," she explained mysteriously. "I'm sure they don't like taking medicine at home, either."

They trailed through the russet ways, back to the road, under chestnuts whose bursting burrs had showered brown fruit on the brown moss. Tibby waited to fill his pockets.

"Fill up de kids," he said sagaciously, "an' dey'll b'lieve anythin' I tell 'em to."

"Lady Imogen" made no objection to taking her place in the car. Her project of being "lost" was delightfully elastic in its application. It was a run of but a few miles to the village. There, almost the first building that they passed was the Sign of the Spotted Leopard, its shutters up and its door fast. A few streets on brought Maverick to a base of supplies and, armed with a pocketful of tire-valves, they took their way back, past the Wood of the Silver Birches, to the scene of the morning's adventure.

When Maverick stood by the roadside near his disabled machine, with his hampers beside him, Lady Sibyl put out her hand.

"I do thank you," she said simply.

Maverick bowed gravely. "It has been a Magic Adventure indeed for

me," he said. "I am sorry that it is ended."

Lady Sibyl looked down the road, hazy in the fire of autumn leaves.

"Saint Syrol has been very gracious," she said lightly. "May the good saint prosper!"

It was no wonder that, as she turned to Maverick shyly and nodded him farewell, he found her wholly beguiling. Perhaps it was this, perhaps it was the mere madness of Saint Syrol's day that slept in the soft air; high in the afternoon blue hung the white moon, yet untamed to the uses of the night's silver.

"Look," said Maverick, "Saint Syrol's moon is up! May it bring you dreams of Saint Syrol's day."

"Good-bye, good-bye!" called "Lady Imogen" peremptorily. "I shall never take any more medicine, but I really must get back to my afternoon nap!"

Maverick, standing bare-headed in the checkered road, looked after them for a long time. When the white veil had fluttered over the brow of a hill, he turned blankly to the empty meadows.

"Gad," he said between his teeth, "consider civilization! It is what is the matter with everything. When did Sir Galahad ever stand helpless while a mysterious damsel motored over a hill and vanished? Curses on the civilization and the dinner engagement that keep me from following her around the world!"

The fields were lying in warm light, haunted by long, slanting shadows. Lady Sibyl threw her veil from her face and sang little snatches of song as she spun along, the red leaves drifting about her. Tibby was silent with chestnuts, and "Lady Imogen" had at once fallen peacefully asleep.

As they approached the stone wall from whose gate "Lady Imogen" had mysteriously made her exit, Lady Sibyl saw a hatless young woman in black hurrying along the roadside. Lady Sibyl slowed the car opposite the gate, and glanced at her sleeping guest in some perplexity. The young woman uttered an exclamation and hastened forward.

"Mrs. Benson!" she cried sharply, and "Lady Imogen" opened her eyes.

"No more of the tablets!" cried "Lady Imogen" severely. "I'll take my powders, but as for the tablets, I'd as lief swallow my thimble."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Benson!" cried the young woman soothingly. Then, as "Lady Imogen" rose, and Tibby lifted the seat and opened the door, the young woman turned to Lady Sibyl.

"I have to thank you," she said gratefully. "Mrs. Benson grows very lonely at times, and this morning while I was away——"

"It isn't that," interrupted "Lady Imogen" plaintively. "I like loneliness well enough, but I want woods to come with it. But all I get is loneliness, with all of you watching me. I wanted to get lost and find barberries, and drink out of a gourd—but it was time for my nap," she finished wearily, "and so I came back. Oh, I haven't the courage to go after my dreams, that's all!" wailed "Lady Imogen" suddenly.

Lady Sibyl sprang to the ground and caught "Lady Imogen's" hands, cold and trembling, in her own.

"Good-bye," she said, her eyes filling with swift tears. "But perhaps, if we just stay at home, the dreams will come to us!"

She left them waving farewells.

"Oh," she thought, "the world is all alike. Mad or sane, office-boy or Saint Syrol's prophet, or English-woman at large in America—we are all looking for dreams to come true, and longing to run away to find them. Perhaps that is why they don't come to us."

The shadows were lengthening and growing indistinct, and the sun hung low and red above the poplars at the edge of the far field. For the first time, as she looked, Lady Sibyl felt alarm, for the lowering sun takes confidence with him, a hostage. Then the spirit of the day danced back to her face. This was a day to remember, and therefore it was a day to live completely—the day of Magic Adventures. Tomorrow she would be laughing over it, safely

domesticated at Queenborough Place. Today she was tasting to the full her first hours of liberty.

Past little toy houses sunk in tulip trees they went, and past riots of flaming creeper over latticed windows, and past spicy sweet fields, ready for even-song. And at last, when the edge of the Park was reached, Lady Sibyl relinquished her seat, and Tibby ran the machine down the Avenue and on to the ferry without a second to spare. It was but a few minutes after six o'clock when they passed Queenborough Lodge.

"What about you?" asked Lady Sibyl suddenly of Tibby. "Won't they be anxious about you at home?"

"Who?" asked Tibby, staring. "Not me? Why, me, I don't live anywhere to speak of. No, ma'am. I ain't expected."

A moment afterward Tibby, taking the car to the stables, crushed ecstatically in his hand something that she had given him.

"Hully gee!" he reflected. "I'd 'a' went fer not'in'!"

Lady Sibyl gained her own rooms without encountering anyone but the butler, from whom she learned that Queenborough had returned two hours before. She sent word to Pamela that she had arrived, and then hurried away to dress. Half an hour later Pamela, very splendid in white velvet and opals, fluttered into her sitting-room.

"Sibyl, Sibyl," she exclaimed distractedly, "Harvey has been so worried. Where on earth——?"

"Oh," said Lady Sibyl, "it wasn't on this earth, Pamela. It was in an enchanted country, with silver birches and the smell of the woods—the woods—the woods! Pamela, have you taught the boys fairy stories?"

"What do you mean?" cried Pamela. "No, of course not. I've had all I could do to have them taught what they ought to know. Sibyl, where have you been?"

Lady Sibyl laughed tantalizingly.

"I've spent Saint Syrol's day," she replied, "in the Wood of the Silver Birches, with 'Lady Imogen,' who

wanted to get lost. If you will have it, I had a run in Westchester County and back, discreetly piloted by your husband's office-boy. And shall I wear pearls or moonstones, Pamela?"

Mrs. Queenborough threw up her glittering hands.

"Perhaps you'll be interested to know," she said a little coldly, "that Harvey, who doesn't know anything about anything," she added significantly, "has brought the Marquis of Winnesdale out to dine. But I'm not going to let him take you in," she said, and swept from the room.

Lady Sibyl looked gravely in the mirror for a moment as her maid clasped her moonstones about her throat.

"The Marquis of Winnesdale," she thought suddenly. "Oh, his trim little landscapes in oil and his trim little family-tree!"

Lady Sibyl had never been so beautiful, the Marquis of Winnesdale thought, as when she came down to the drawing-room, her face still aglow with the joy of her day. The marquis would have been delightfully boyish and eager if he had not so long played at being bored with life—a dangerous toy in the hands of the children who invariably affect it.

"And what have you been doin' in America?" he asked Lady Sibyl, in his half-staccato, half-drawl. "Rusticatin', eh? Findin' out pretty, primeval secrets—eh?"

"I've done nothing worth while yet," returned Lady Sibyl serenely, "but I'm thinking very seriously, Lord Winnesdale, of letting down my hair and playing Indian girl all over the estate."

Mr. Headly Madder nodded and smiled quizzically.

"Exactly," he nodded. "Women love to breathe the atmosphere of another age, and, being fallen by accident upon the evil days of the twentieth century——"

Lady Sibyl turned a radiant face upon him.

"Ah, Mr. Madder," she cried softly, "today I can instruct you. I've been up in the woods of your Westchester

County, and I've found out what England and most of America do not know—that the twentieth-century woods have all the dead centuries in them, waiting to be re-lived."

Mr. Madder shrugged his shoulders. "Women of imagination—" he began to repeat.

"What an interestin' fancy, Lady Sibyl!" said the Marquis of Winnesdale.

When the last guest arrived, Lady Sibyl was looking over some music. Mrs. Queenborough, presenting him to her with a grave, modulated word or two to the effect that he was to take her sister down, went off on the arm of the marquis. And there before Lady Sibyl, quite without warning as is the coming of any god of the woods, stood Maverick.

She looked at him helplessly, her pretty greeting idle on her lips, but, in spite of her will, leaping to her eyes.

"Ah," said Maverick wistfully, "but is this only the dream that we wished each other?"

"I think," said Lady Sibyl wonderingly, "that this is more than dreams can do."

He turned to her radiantly, compelling her eyes.

"It is the Magic Adventure," he said softly.

She laid her hand on his arm, and

they went down the stairs. The soft speech and laughter of the others flowed about them as they took their places. Mr. Madder was telling how someone had come a nasty cropper at an old stile in the hunt that day, and the Marquis of Winnesdale was drawling musically through an incident of himself and the ferry ticket-taker.

"This," said Maverick happily, "is strange company for two spirits of Saint Syrol's day!"

The eyes of both wandered to the window, standing open to the white terrace, where lay the world of the woods—their world, with the high, trembling trees and the sleepy-sweet wind poured through the leaves by secret hands.

"But we have kept tryst," said Lady Sibyl. "Saint Syrol's moon is up!"

Afterward, in the sane and illumined days that followed the coming of her great love, Lady Sibyl, grown wise and tender and strong in the knowledge that life is far greater than dreams, would sometimes ask him if it could really have happened—that madcap Saint Syrol's day.

"Perhaps not," Maverick would answer lightly. "Perhaps it is only one of the things that might have happened. For we all dream of those!"



NOTHING MORE NEEDED

MRS. CLARKER—You will never admit that you have made a mistake.
CLARKER—I don't need to; that marriage certificate is evidence enough.



THE CEREMONY

"WHAT was the wedding like?"
"Beautiful. It beggared description and her father."

May 1905

DAFFODILS

THE silver snowdrop's tinkling bell
 Has ceased its early chime;
 The fragile crocus did but dwell
 A rainbow's short lifetime.

And now its Iris-beauty lies
 Against the cold, brown earth;
 A butterfly's torn wing that cries
 To March's wild, mad mirth.

But the yellow flare of daffodils
 Breaks like the sunshine's ray,
 Low-lying 'tween the distant hills
 At closing of the day.

And they wrap the earth in gladness bright,
 So that, when dusk has come,
 One thinks it cannot yet be night
 For the golden light therefrom.

NATHALIE BOULIGNY SMYTH.



POOR HUMAN NATURE

CRAWFORD—What object can people have in making trouble?
 CRABSHAW—I guess it's a question of supply and demand. There are
 just as many other people looking for it.



AT THE WOMAN'S CLUB

“WHY was she blackballed?”
 “Why, because.”



ON THE OTHER SIDE

SENIOR—Well, my boy, have you been a credit to me at college?
 JUNIOR—No, dad, a debit.

THE CAUSE

By Owen Oliver

THE Cause that I fought for doesn't matter now. The right prevailed, slowly and under another name, when politicians had forgotten the matter. It ought never to have been a matter of politics. But it made a good party-cry; and the Ins and the Outs persuaded the people to take sides upon it.

I had no conviction upon the subject myself, so I chose the side that was easiest to write upon. I was a journalist with a taste for handling figures, and a knack of making things seem plainer than they are. I am no longer a journalist, so I can give away the secret. You leave the difficult points out. Sometimes they matter. Sometimes they don't. In this case they did.

After my third article in the *Daily Lyre* a great man sent for me. He was in the Government, and he really was a great man. He judged me quickly and correctly.

"We needn't talk round things," he said. "The question doesn't matter a brass farthing, one way or the other, so far as I can see; but we've got to wrangle about something, and we've stumbled upon this. Your articles have glorified it into a 'cause,' and voters like to vote about something big. So we're going to the polls upon it. Unfortunately, it's a real issue, and the conclusion turns upon real figures and facts. There's a wide choice of facts and figures; and we politicians aren't good at handling either. I see from your articles that you are, and you have the gift of the pen. I am told that you have the

gift of the tongue also. A very little will turn the elections, and we want to make use of you. What do *you* want?"

I stretched myself back in my chair, with my arms behind my head, and measured my man and myself. He was no cleverer than I; but he was the buyer of the brains, and I the seller. He need not buy unless he liked, and I *had* to sell. That was his advantage. On the other hand, the price didn't matter so much to him as to me, and he wouldn't fight so hard about terms. That was mine. I would play the big game.

"The Governorship of Colonia," I said calmly.

He raised his eyebrows and shook his head emphatically. I had known that he would.

"We'll talk sense," he said curtly.

"It's your turn, my lord," I answered politely.

He twisted his mustache and measured me. As I have said, he judged me correctly. I am not a weak man.

"We've got to get rid of Lord Exe," he explained. "He is a—an influential fool. We've settled to give him Colonia."

"Then you had better make use of *him*," I retorted. I rose to go, but the great man motioned me back to my seat.

"Come, Mr. Drake," he said, with a smile. "You're bluffing, as our Yankee friends say. You'd take less, if you knew you couldn't get that."

"And you'd give that, if you knew I wouldn't take less," I retorted.

He stroked his mustache to cover the smile on his lips; but I detected

it in his eyes. He liked me, I saw. That was another point in my favor.

"It doesn't fall vacant till after the general election," he reminded me. "If we're out I can't give it to you."

"I understand," I assented.

He considered with a frown. "Very well," he promised at length. "You pledge yourself to us?"

I shook my head. "No pledge," I said. "I've never been a tied man yet. If I back out, you back out. That's all."

He laughed carelessly. "You won't back out, because you couldn't get a better offer. We'll put you in for Boroughby. It's unopposed. The fund will pay your election expenses. See Newby about that. Good morning."

"Good morning, my lord," I said. The air seemed full of excitement as I walked out into the street. The chance of my life was in my hands, and I believed in myself. I had come also to believe in the Cause.

I made a hit in the House, as I had done in the papers, and my fellow M.P.'s accepted me as an authority. I gave them such facts and arguments as they could take in, and kept back those which they could not grasp. They thought that I understood the subject, because they thought that they understood me! The electors thought they understood the question because they thought they understood them.

So the Cause made good progress in Parliament and on the platforms; but in the press and in the social circles where political wires are pulled we met with unexpected opposition. The centre of the opposition was Lady Alice Armand. She was young and beautiful, and the second daughter of a duke. She had been a star at Girtton, three years before, and she had all the charm and goodness imaginable, and she wrote under the name of "Cecil Gray." I had some advantage in the press—she would admit that I was the more skilled writer—but I was not in political society. And I think anyhow she would have

beaten me there; for society understands people, if it understands nothing else, and even her opponents trusted her.

"She has only one weakness," the Great Man said. In spite of political diversities he knew her intimately. "She is in earnest—terribly in earnest. If you could persuade her that our view is right, she'd wear the white sheet unflinchingly. Look here, Drake; you really *are* a clever chap. Try if you can't convert her. My sister will introduce you."

"There was a missionary who set out to convert the Jews," I warned him. "They made a Jew of him! Your Lady Alice is a magnetic person."

He laughed carelessly.

"The missionary was too much in earnest," he asserted. "You're no missionary. As to magnetism—you are probably quite aware that *you* are an attractive and magnetic young man. It wouldn't do you any harm to get into society. A colonial governor ought to be married; and there are lots of nice girls who would be—helpful in a career. Shall I give you a note to my sister?"

"Many thanks," I agreed. I wasn't prepared to marry a "helpful" lady if I did not like her; but I was prepared to like her if she was helpful!

I went to the great lady, his sister, with the note; and she invited me to somebody else's ball that evening and introduced me to Lady Alice.

"I haven't asked you beforehand if you want to know each other," she said, "because of your silly politics; but really, my dears, you ought to be mutually interesting. See if you can't talk music or drama or art; and, if you *must* quarrel about your political enormities, don't do it here." Then she disappeared.

"I'm afraid I'm not interesting on the fine arts," I apologized. "Will you try me on my enormities?"

Lady Alice looked at me with her big black eyes wide open. She had a gift, which I have found in no other

beautiful woman, of looking right at you without any suspicion of coquetry.

"I should very much like to discuss our points of difference," she said. "But they are too serious for a ball-room conversation. Could we find some other occasion?"

"If Daniel might venture into the lion's den?"

"If he will promise not to shut the lion's mouth"—she smiled brightly—"I should think it very nice of you."

We fixed upon the next afternoon. Then we danced a valse. I should scarcely have ventured to ask so great a lady for a dance; but she saw me glance at her program, and asked smilingly if dancing was one of the fine arts that did not appeal to me. I think she understood my hesitation and helped me. She was like that. We danced one of the extras afterward. We were both good dancers, and good dancers soon make friends. So we started our discussion upon a comfortable footing.

"I want to discuss the merits of the question," she began, "not its politics. It is absurd that such a matter should be decided as a side-issue of an election, and by ignorant voters. In everything but politics the ignorant refer their differences to the expert. In politics the experts refer them to—the voter!"

"The presumption is that the expert will make out the best case and prevail."

"The presumption is doubly incorrect. The best case doesn't appeal most to the public, and the wisest man doesn't always put his case best. Science is made by the *savant*, not by the popular lecturer."

"Science is matter of proof. Politics is matter of opinion. You can't demonstrate your conclusion."

"In this case you can. Suppose it were a matter of business, and you and I were business people. We shouldn't argue with one another by long speeches addressed to an ignorant third person. We should sit down at a table and thresh it out, and come to a conclusion, between ourselves."

"Possibly. But it isn't a matter of

business, and we can't settle it between ourselves."

"Not directly; but indirectly we can. We are both sincere, and open to conviction. If one of us can convince the other, we can convince other people between us. Shall we try?"

I accepted the challenge readily. As I have owned, I had not probed the question to the bottom, and I thought my arguments stronger than they were. They *were* strong enough to save me from her; but they were not strong enough to save me from myself. I did not own my defeat, and she did not suspect me of concealing it.

"I do not deny the correctness of your principles, Lady Alice," I said finally; "but political questions are questions of practice. The two are very different."

"Not if one's view is wide enough," she pleaded. "The principles of yesterday are the practice of today. The martyrs are dead; but their faith is living. The heroes are gone, but their country is free. We owe it to our ancestors to make sacrifices for tomorrow. Perhaps this question, in itself, is not worth the sacrifice. Perhaps, as you say, it won't matter much in a hundred years' time; but it will matter if we have set the example of bravely doing our best, when it wasn't the easiest thing to do. If you would think of it like that—?"

"The practical best is the best that men can be got to carry out," I asserted. "Politics has no use for ideals."

"Everything good is an ideal," she insisted. "Why has Christianity moved the world? Because its ideal is unattainable. Man never reaches it. There is always something to look up to. I give up the attempt to convince you on this question, Mr. Drake. You are cleverer than I; and your arguments will prevail over mine. But—may I speak to you, not as a political opponent, but as a man? As a strong man whom I esteem? I should like to feel that you were looking up to—to something—" She flushed with earnestness, and I flushed for—other reasons.

"Yes," I said, "you may feel that, Lady Alice. It doesn't come easy to me to 'look up'; but I shall have no difficulty in looking up to *you*. Good-bye."

I looked up to her and down on myself as I walked home; but I could not look down on the governorship. So I sat at my desk all that evening, and wrote my usual article for the *Daily Lyre*. I called it "Common Sense"; and it proved a successful appeal to the voter who had none.

Two days later Lady Alice replied in the *Trumpet*. Her article was headed, "Do Right!" It was frankly a criticism upon my article. She wrote of me as "an opponent whose conspicuous ability and evident sincerity I acknowledge and admire." She addressed herself to "those who will not believe in any expediency but right," and admitted the practical difficulties which I urged to the full. "There are sacrifices to make," she said. "Let us make them!"

I bit my lip over the article; but my leader chuckled.

"A good sermon," he said, "but a bad political move. She's admitted your best points, and met you on your own ground. You'll have an easy victory in the controversy."

Nevertheless I declined controversy with her.

"Anyone who knows the charming and gifted lady who writes as Cecil Gray," I wrote, "will believe that her high ideals might be practicable in a utopian existence of beings like herself. But we are only human beings, and this is the only life that we live. Ideals are only useful to us if we can realize them in actual, everyday life. No argument is possible between Cecil Gray and myself, because she addresses herself to saints out of the rush and worry of life, and I address myself to practical, struggling women and men. They do not ask me about principles, but how this question will touch them in their pocket, in their comfort, in their everyday life. I do not pretend to show them more than that. I can claim no higher testi-

monial than Cecil Gray's admission that I show them so much correctly. I shall not, therefore, deal with her article; but I am glad to have this opportunity of recording my great admiration for her."

"I think you must have some Irish ancestors who kissed the Blarney stone!" the Great Man said when he had read my article. "You have demolished her article without offending her. She told my sister that she admires you greatly, and thinks that any views which you express are worthy of consideration, although she cannot herself agree with you. By the way, Drake—I like you, you know—don't fancy that even a colonial governor is a match for the Duke of Armand's daughter."

I nodded without answering. He was a singularly wise man, and it did not follow that others would see my admiration for her because he saw it; but I did not wish to risk making a fool of myself. So I decided to avoid talking to her. But she always seemed anxious to talk to me when we met, and I could not resist the temptation. We met frequently, and I talked to her a great deal. She never argued with me about the Cause now; but just to know her was argument enough. I grew to hate the Cause, but it was my only road to the governorship; and so far as I could judge the result of the election was practically secured.

She owed as much to me three days before the election.

"You are going to win," she said suddenly. "I don't bear any malice because you have beaten me. You are cleverer than I; and you know how to reach people. Your arguments are true, too, so far as they go. Even my own people quote them against me. Do you know there is one thing that almost makes me believe them. *You* believe in them—and I believe in you!"

When a man is hit hard enough he never knows just how he feels. I felt like that. Then I caught a deep breath, as if I hadn't been breathing before.

"I *don't* believe them," I said stead-

ily. "They offered me a governorship. I was a poor man and ambitious, and I didn't know you then. I didn't think these things mattered—before."

I took my hat and walked slowly to the door. I didn't look at her; but I heard her gasp. She gave a sharp, hurt cry—I think she called me back—as I took the handle; but I did not return. I did not even call myself a fool. I didn't think about myself at all; only of her.

I applied that afternoon for the Chiltern Hundreds, and I wrote to my leader and the press. "The missionary has been converted," I told him. "When I knew her I had to be a man. I'm sorry to have failed you. You needn't fear that I shall give the party away. I'm going to play the game."

"I have looked the question fairly in the face," I told the papers, "and I see that I am wrong. The principles involved are more important than their effects, and hitherto I have only concerned myself with the latter."

I didn't conceal the rest to save myself, but for his sake—and hers.

I wrote to some friends in South Africa, and asked them to get me a place as a clerk, warehouseman—anything. I didn't read the papers, but I learned from the placards and from casual conversations that the Cause prevailed, though by a much smaller majority than had been anticipated. The loss of votes was put down to my defection. My influence had been very strong, it seemed, and I might have been a great man if I had not retired from political life. I admitted to myself now that I had been a fool; but I would have done it again.

I did not hear from the party, but Lady Alice wrote to me. I returned her letter unopened, with a short note.

DEAR LADY ALICE:

It is not unkindness that I fear in your letter, but kindness. Out of your goodness do not hurt me by trying to console. Believe me, my memory of you will always be the best thing in my life.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT DRAKE.

She wrote again, and I returned the letter with a briefer note:

I love you. Now you will understand.

It was the day before I was leaving for South Africa that I wrote this. I was feverishly anxious to get away from England, and I arrived at Waterloo an hour before the train left. As I strolled along the platform I met Lady Alice, leaning on my ex-leader's arm. She did not speak, only looked at me; but he took my arm with his disengaged hand.

"I've always noticed," he said, "that there's no one so dense as a clever man. He doesn't even know his friends! So you thought you were going to slip off without saying goodbye?"

"God bless you, sir—both," I said. My voice was husky. "I—I had to go."

"Yes," he agreed, "you had to go; but why to South Africa?"

"Can you suggest anywhere better?" I asked.

"Colonia," he said. "I've appointed you governor—on a condition."

We grasped hands tightly.

"I accept blindfold any condition that *you* make," I told him.

He smiled.

"It's nothing much," he stated. "Just to get married. I told you a governor ought to— There's a man I must speak to. Lady Alice will tell you—the rest."

He hurried away, and I found myself standing with her. I had just sense enough to give her my arm and walk down to the quiet end of the platform. I could not find my voice, even then; and it was she who spoke first.

"Now," she whispered, "*you* will understand."

"Dearest of all women," I said, "I understand. You would sacrifice yourself, your position, for one who is quite unworthy of you, but——"

"There is no 'but,'" she said, "and no sacrifice. Oh, no! It is not a sacrifice. Or, if you call it one—well, we'll say that in practice I am wrong. But there is the principle—to give up everything—and think it nothing—for—for the sake of all true men and loving women—for the greatest Cause!"

LIMITATION

AMONG all creatures ever God conceived
 The most superb and strange, far in the van
 Of all that has been, wearing like a prince
 The native glory of the heavenly plan,
 He comes, straight-limbed, white-browed, the master, Man,
 With his proud rallying word, "I have achieved.

"Mankind owes this to *me*. This *I* have done."
 So takes the merit of the town or tower
 Or little system christened with his name,
 Harvests the quick brief worship of the hour,
 And sets a wistful record of his power
 In pomp of golden blazonry and stone.

Thy works? This unlearned law—this faulty creed?
 This fragment of a half truth, poorly seen?
Thy works, when this, thy boast—all boasts of man,
 And every shining glory he can glean,
 Ere time's first dawn lay perfect and serene
 Waiting for thee and brooding on thy need!

Thy fairest work is but a following
 Afar toward an end thou wilt not find—
 A frail and finite thing soon to be lost
 In the vast brightness of the initial mind.
 Thou canst not span the stars nor rule the wind
 Nor make one little linnet's shining wing.

MILDRED I. MCNEAL.



THE MORE THE MERRIER

MRS. ARCHER—I thought your husband didn't like children.
MRS. PAYNE—He didn't, but you see he has been appointed enumerator of our school district and he gets five cents for each child he finds.



WHAT HE WOULD HAVE SUPPOSED

HE—You have an appointment to call on Mrs. Gadabout? At her home?
HIS WIFE—Certainly. Where would you suppose?
 "Oh, almost anywhere else."

CONCERNING MR. PENWINKLE

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

WE were summoned to the Penwinkle house to consider the disposition of Uncle Penwinkle's property.

Cousin Marius Penwinkle's wife and daughter came over in a purple automobile, and sat openly expressing through their lorgnettes what we were all inwardly wondering: why old McCrae should have assembled us to sit, literally and metaphorically, upon the moth-eaten possessions of a hypochondriac who bought three pennies' worth of beef for a meal, and looked upon a roe-herring as a sumptuous repast.

John Davenport Penwinkle was known to have possessed:

An Empire coat, turned green at the seams.

A snuffbox presented to a great-grand Penwinkle by George the Fourth.

A faded eyeglass ribbon an inch wide.

An elephantine fob terminating in a very Penwinkle crest and seal.

A silver candlestick which had lighted him to bed for fifty years, and a superannuated body-servant named Peter, who was chief executioner, culinary expert and domestic of the establishment. For no woman, even in guise of a cook, had ever been seen to enter the Penwinkle walls in the recollection of my generation.

The kith and kin knew but little personally about Uncle Penwinkle, except that he nourished a passion for whist and against women and politics. His seclusion was said to have dated from a complication involving one or both of the latter subjects; and as he could not have avoided them had he re-

mained in the world, he discreetly stepped out of it. My mother had told me in my youth that, after a dozen or so years in Australia, Uncle Penwinkle suddenly appeared, to shut himself in his lonely house, and there, rumor had it, to devote the remainder of his life to nursing a bitter enmity against all creatures feminine. The political scapegoat died of inanition, but the feminine one flourished in family annals, and bore, as is her wont, the brunt of all the eccentricities developed by this exclusive member.

The world's memory being the length of its enjoyment, Uncle Penwinkle was soon forgotten, for all practical purposes. When I was a boy my mother sent me now and then to call upon him, and the visits gradually became a regular part of life's routine. It is possible that heredity was to blame for the bond which they eventually established between Uncle Penwinkle and me. The shadowy, old-fashioned atmosphere, the firelight, the tall candle on the card-table, the portrait of Uncle Penwinkle, a hand thrust into his satin waistcoat, his profile turned after the manner of Washington surveying Valley Forge; the protrusion out of the dusky corner of the Imp of Ely, a bas-relief over Uncle Penwinkle's chair; even the ticking of the great clock, always an hour slow, as if to rebel openly, if vainly, against Time's determined pace—all these grew to be a distinctive part of my imaginative life.

As our acquaintance assumed a more secure footing with years, I managed occasionally to elicit a sarcastic epigram from Uncle Penwinkle, mainly directed against the youth of my own

generation. One night he so far forgot himself as to allude to the late war—meaning that of '12; whereupon I called him a Tory. He rose and steadied himself by the card-table, extending a menacing forefinger.

"And you, sir!" he cried. "Is there one of my name who dares associate himself with the cursed brood of——?"

"Ten o'clock, Marse John, an' yo' water gittin' col'," said Peter's voice, and a dark hand touched his arm warningly.

I determined thereafter to let the sleeping dog of politics lie. And woman? After fifty years did she, too, represent a sleeping dog? The very next time I entered the Penwinkle gate—it was in the dusk of early autumn—a feminine figure emerged from it, and I stood transfixed and not over-pleased, having grown to believe in Uncle Penwinkle's consistencies and to vouch for them. Now the figure looked out of its hood and spoke to me. It was Marabel Lee, another cousin, whose mother made what the family had considered a fine match. Her husband gamed away her money, and she died of heart-failure, and Marabel lived in a cottage alone, and taught a country school. She was usually alluded to by her prosperous kin as "Poor Marabel." But the poverty did not extend to her appearance, for she had attained that which we know as "beauty's height" and possessed the exquisite, soft-grained fairness which comes of generations of nice sensibility toward things material and moral.

"Marabel! In the name of Saint Antony, how did you discover the Penwinkle combination?" I exclaimed.

She smiled through the twilight with an innocent shade of triumph. "I've been in—all the way in—the house several times. The first time, I peeped in the window at Cousin John, and he looked so old and lonely that—that I went in and told him his fire needed fixing."

"Most courageous of your sex!" I interpolated.

"Then I took my hat off and knelt

down and blew the fire, and he said: 'Marabel!'—as if I had been a ghost. He looked so queer that I thought I'd nearly killed him. So I came away."

"He knew your name? Amazing!"

"Others—some others—don't consider it so," said Marabel.

"Go on! Go on!" I urged.

"Not if you laugh at me!"

"I never laugh," I assured her. "Laughter belongs to children and fools and the imp over Uncle Penwinkle's chair."

Marabel inspected me gravely, contemptatively, for a moment, and then continued: "Well, I went back the next evening and walked in and sat down beside him. We didn't talk very much, because he looked so unable to express the rage he was evidently undergoing; I really thought once he was going to ring for Peter to put me out."

"Of course! What did you expect?" I asked.

"Not of course, at all," said Marabel. "No one—that is, no one except Uncle Penwinkle—would have thought of such a thing."

"Perhaps." I spoke musingly.

"Oh, you!" Her tone was ambiguous. "But you are growing like him, Cousin Harry."

"I like Uncle Penwinkle!" I chuckled in spite of myself.

Marabel gave me a sweeping glance over her shoulder. "I often go now. But you mustn't tell, because—because—well, he likes to have me come!"

I courteously vowed that Uncle Penwinkle's taste was not dead, at any rate, and started up the road with Marabel, but she stopped me.

"Nonsense! I am your cousin," I expostulated. "I shall not allow you to go back alone!"

A little moon, a young, pallid moon, floated above the firs between the wind clouds, and Marabel smiled up at it in confidence.

"I have been here before—alone. No, Cousin Harry, while I am living by myself I must keep men at a distance."

"Uncle Penwinkle excepted," I retorted.

"Oh, Cousin John is old and lonely."

"So am I," I interpolated.

"But I have made him more comfortable, in little ways. You know he claims to hate women on general principles, but it's a poor principle that cannot be reversed sometimes. He might not let me return if he learned that anyone knew—even you, Cousin Harry—and I'm so sorry for him!"

Marabel was not given to pleading. When she did she was irresistible. I stepped aside meekly, saying:

"It is good of you to give him your time, Marabel."

"And how about yours?" she retorted. "You seldom take a holiday, you are always working, yet for years you have taken care of a helpless old man and have been his only friend. You have cheered him, and have given up many of your evenings to him. Oh, I know, Cousin Harry, I know all about it."

"How has this exceptional knowledge been acquired?" I interrupted.

"Don't be rude," said Marabel. "One must know things unless one is stupid. I know a number about you, sir. One is, that you are not so sarcastic as you sound. Another is, that you have tried, almost as a son would, to make this poor old man happier——"

In vain I assured Marabel that my friendship with Uncle Penwinkle was a mere selfish indulgence to my naturally retiring disposition. She mocked me.

"Uncle Penwinkle did not have to lead a lonely life," I added.

"One does not always reckon with the loneliness of the future when deciding the present," said Marabel.

"Most sagacious of philosophers, are you contemplating matrimony?" I ventured. But Marabel's eyes were on the drifting clouds across the moon.

"Cousin John has suffered," she continued. "He is cynical and impatient, keen and intolerant, sensitive and poetic. You are not unlike him at all." She surveyed me, smiling now, and I laughed aloud. Sensitive, poetic!

Women catch at the floating hair of an idea and think they have the proof.

Then Marabel's face shone out of its hood beneath a lock of hair blown across her brows.

"You would not allow the love for a woman to wreck your life? You would be brave and courageous and fill your place in the world anyhow, wouldn't you, Cousin Harry?"

I assured Marabel that my chief reason for thanksgiving was that no woman filled a vital part in my life or influenced me at all, and she sighed in relief.

"In fact, Marabel, I determined long since to die a bachelor—like Uncle Penwinkle."

"No, no! Not like that; you are made for better than that."

Her voice was strangely intense, and for a second her hand, strong and delicate, lay on my arm, as her eyes scanned my face. Then she flew down the road with a flutter of black drapery blown back, closed upon by darkness, like the woman in Fleury's picture of "A Road by Night."

I went up to the house behind the firs, pondering upon the perversity of the feminine mind. But be it known that thereafter I detected a gentler touch than mine or Peter's in the neighborhood of Uncle Penwinkle. Slight signals, which had passed unnoticed, now appealed to my quickened vision. I became convinced that his chair cushion was of a gayer hue, and that neither Peter nor I had covered his footstool with some frivolous fabric representing gillyflowers in a gale of wind. I missed a coating of dust which usually decorated familiar objects, and was conscious of a little screen between our faces and the candles. The vases on the high mantel, and even the positions of the stalwart furniture, seemed to assume less aggressive and possessive attitudes. In fact, the room had become subjective rather than objective, and Uncle Penwinkle was owner of his Lares and Penates, which heretofore appeared to resent more than a distant acquaintanceship, and to withhold

themselves as if in fear of underbred familiarity. Furthermore, there was something in the atmosphere which suggested the subtle associative odor of late violets. I recalled in a vague way having seen a glass frame for their winter bed under Marabel's cottage window.

Alas for Uncle Penwinkle and his sleeping dogs! Night after night I took silent observation, detective-like, and smiled with cynicism in sympathy with the Imp of Ely over his chair.

One evening I arrived earlier than usual; in fact, it was premeditated. The detective impulse had become an idle but interesting pastime. The heavy curtains covering Uncle Penwinkle's window were slightly apart, and a light impulse caused me to stand on tiptoe to look within.

Then I grasped the sill and clung, gazing with an unaccustomed heart-throb. Marabel sat beside the card-table, the candlelight catching every wave of her ruddy hair, which was piled in a high knot. She wore a quaintly flowered gown, with a waist under the arms, and ruffles falling back from her white throat and arms as she leaned forward reading aloud to Uncle Penwinkle from a newspaper.

The old man sat opposite, the picture of serene content, the expression of which I had never expected to see on his face. His head was bent, his finger-tips together, his gaze upon Marabel. It was a strange but peaceful look, and recalled the face of my mother as I remembered her looking upon the picture of a beloved child who had died in infancy.

But why Marabel should masquerade in this old-fashioned gown for the benefit of Uncle Penwinkle baffled me. I felt like a child at Christmas who is shut out from a whole fairy tale by a closed door. Therefore, I rapped resentfully with the brass knocker, and a few seconds later the interior transformation would have done credit to a more experienced stage-manager than Peter.

He was blowing the fire with the bellows, Uncle Penwinkle was calmly

shuffling cards, the imp above him was grinning out of its shadow with exultation—and Marabel was not there!

But I determined not to be outwitted, for I claimed the right of prior possession, and went earlier than ever in the evenings. I patrolled the road near the Penwinkle gate—for it was frosty now, and starlight. I penetrated the house by unexpected methods and harkened for light and stealthy footfalls. I tacitly set burglar-alarms for Marabel, all of which she evaded with the success of a practiced criminal. Before long I grew irritated and neglected my meals, all the time inwardly railing against Uncle Penwinkle for permitting a woman to become eventually the mainspring of his machinery. Then, one evening, Marabel suddenly appeared at the little field-wicket leading into the place by a side path, and I accused her of trying to elude me.

"Not willingly," said she deftly, and then and there something tremendous happened. I can declare it was all because of a look deep down into Marabel's eyes. I was amazed, stunned, tumultuous, exalted, delirious, all in a second. I had caught the immortal fever which, like a cough, cannot be hid.

"Marabel, I love you, I cannot live without you!" I exclaimed. "And you know it—you have known it, Marabel!"

"No—perhaps so—maybe not," she murmured, striving to pass, but I caught her hands long enough to ask her to marry me then and there, never to leave me—and adding amendments not to be chronicled. But she wrenched her hands away and wrapped them in her cloak, facing me steadily.

"I shall not marry you, Cousin Harry, now or ever. I am going away, up to town, for several months, to take a kindergarten course, and I wish you would see to Cousin Penwinkle. He is very feeble lately."

"Do you mean that you cannot love me, Marabel?" I demanded.

"I mean what I say," said Marabel, flying down the road, and I after her, determined upon pursuit and an-

swer. I caught her cloak, but a sobbing breath checked me.

"Oh, please let me go! Let me go now!"

Then I stood looking after her, losing her in the darkness.

From that time Uncle Penwinkle's disposition underwent an undesirable change. He grew captious if he did not win at cards, and sarcastic if he did. Moreover, I commenced to find the change contagious. Two months passed with no signal from Marabel, and I was about to risk repelling her and to go in search of her when, one stormy night, after a day's business in a neighboring borough, I went up to the Penwinkle house. Old Peter met me at the door, his hand held up to enjoin silence.

"De doctor's gone, suh. He say he can't do nuffin mo'."

I entered, feeling the inexplicable sense of a Presence. Uncle Penwinkle lay on the bed, pallid with approaching death, and Marabel knelt beside him. Her hat and traveling-cloak were on a chair, and she held Uncle Penwinkle's hands in both her own, soothing him with murmured motherly words. As I entered he spoke to her.

"God bless you, Marabel—I knew that you would come at last, my love—always my only love!"

He sighed a last sigh of contentment; then Marabel threw her hands to her face.

"God forgive me if I have done wrong!" I heard her say.

II

A FEW days afterward, at the funeral, she stood in the Penwinkle lot beside old Peter, and in the moment when the earth claimed and received its own, I marked Mrs. Marius taking Marabel's measure in detail. Later, at the gate, she shook hands with me.

"Of course we expected to see you here, Harry, but it was not necessary for dear Angelique to come—although, of course, Marius is Cousin Penwinkle's near relative. Marius has always made

a point of calling on New Year's Day. He says the port was the most execrable he ever tasted." She laid an impressive black kid finger on the window-ledge of the carriage. "Harry, never forget that young people have a duty to discharge toward society."

"And that duty, *chère madame*?" I asked.

"Why—er—to consider it, always," she replied.

I assured Mrs. Marius that I always considered it a bore, but she looked so genuinely horrified that I offered amendment.

"Not when it is the society of Cousin Marius's wife, however."

"Naughty boy!" said the lady. "One can never take him seriously. Ah, Harry, Harry, some day you may realize how serious a matter life is."

And realizing then and there Mrs. Marius's eiderdown existence and how serious a matter it was for a briefless barrister to keep the wolf from crossing his threshold, I sighed in hearty acquiescence.

Cousin Marius climbed heavily into his side of the carriage, saying: "Wasn't that Mary Penwinkle Lee's daughter—tall girl with bright hair and gray eyes? Stunning-looking creature!"

"Cousin Marabel was there, I believe," said I, who had not lost sight of her for the fraction of a minute.

"Cousin? Oh, no real relation," said Mrs. Marius, "is she? Really! Well, she may be a nice enough sort of person, poor Marabel, but for a young woman to live alone—and she might have shown respect enough to have worn a black gown."

"Gad, she's handsome enough in the one she has on!" uttered Cousin Marius as they drove off.

When the black-wheeled edifice disappeared Marabel came down the road with Peter in her wake. He kept on to the lonely house behind the fir. Marabel shut herself behind her hedge and talked across it to me.

"Something must be done for Peter," she said. "He will die of grief and loneliness, Cousin Harry."

"If they killed easily, the world would not be so thickly populated," I assured her; "but I will see to Peter."

She may have divined that Peter was not my sole object in life at the moment, for she said hurriedly: "I return to town in a day or two. Good-bye!"

Then she closed the door, and I went up the road, feeling strangely like—Peter.

It was the day after the funeral that we were summoned by old McCrae to confer about Uncle Penwinkle's property. When we had collected ourselves as a family we realized anew that the sum of Uncle Penwinkle's mortal possessions might be done in very short division.

The pallid sun, that struck sharply through the great windows, revealed the shabbiness of the old-fashioned room and worn carpet. The great chairs were pushed into corners, and the candlestick banished to the dusty mantel, while the card-table held the lawyer's hat and gloves. Mrs. Marius sat on the haircloth sofa, scrutinizing the possibilities through her glass, and her husband walked back and forth, restlessly impatient. Their daughter Angelique sat on an ottoman conversing with her cousin, the briefless barrister, who drew patterns on the carpet with his stick, and thought about one member of the family who should have been there. Angelique possessed the assured prettiness which comes from much grooming and absolute satisfaction with one's clothes.

"Old McCrae is so fussy and important," she was saying. "There is nothing here that would fetch a dollar in a junk-shop, unless it's that horrible grinning gargoyle over the chair. I'm quite crazy about that." This of my friend, the Imp of Ely. "Mercy, Harry! Who is that?"

This was of one who stood hesitatingly in the doorway—Marabel, with a slow wave of rose-light mounting distractingly to her white brow and its bright rings of hair. She looked helplessly across at the lawyer as I rose and bent forward.

"Cousin Harry, Mr. McCrae sent for me——"

"Certainly, Miss Lee. Mr. Penwinkle's niece, are you not? All the family is expected."

"No; only his cousin." Marabel turned to retreat, but Cousin Marius thrust a detaining hand out.

"Nonsense, child; sit down! Soon be over. Nothing much to consider. Gad, you're the image of your mother! Every man Jack of us mad about her once! Poor Cousin John! Yes, yes! Here, my dear, this is Mary Lee's daughter——"

Mrs. Marius bowed coldly, and her daughter nodded forcedly as Marabel slipped into a seat in the background. Then the lawyer put a small box on the table and spoke with professional formality—mere words, from which my mind wandered to fix itself upon a ray of light just escaping Marabel's hair.

McCrae had summoned us to consider the property of the deceased client, John Davenport Penwinkle. The mockery of the form caused my glance to stray to the imp beyond. McCrae proceeded:

"Knowing that the late Mr. Penwinkle was of solitary habit and—er—not engaged in business, I was somewhat surprised a few months ago when he sent for me, and placed in my keeping this box, to be held in trust during his lifetime. As the late Mr. Penwinkle died intestate, and suddenly, it now awaits the claim of his nearest of kin. It contains securities and cash to the amount of seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

Blank silence.

In one transfigured instant I received a mechanical photograph of the ray of light finding Marabel, even in her corner, and of the slow ebbing of color from her face; of Cousin Marius, hands upon his knees, and an apoplectic stare on his countenance. Then a voice broke the spell.

"Fo' de Lo'd's sake, whar he done keep it all?"

Peter had followed Marabel and now emerged, a dusky figure, from the hall. Then a hubbub of voices

rose, each seeming to vie with the other.

"Next of kin? Why, gad, Harry, that's you!" from Cousin Marius.

"Harry, my dear boy! I feel as if it were my own son!" from his wife.

"Oh, Cousin Harry, what a perfectly lucky thing to happen, and so romantic!" from his daughter.

"Without doubt, as no will has been forthcoming, Mr. Penwinkle is his uncle's heir," from McCrae.

Hands were thrust forward in congratulation; words beat about me like treeless birds, and all the blood in me seemed to sound in my ears.

It was a travesty!—impossible! What motive had Uncle Penwinkle for concealing his money? I turned helplessly toward Marabel—strange, but at some moments a man is actually helpless without a woman to turn to. Then I knew that it was true. Something in her proud face, something radiant, soft, glad, sorry, determined—something that held renunciation and farewell and benison at once—told me all in a second her sweet and foolish thought. She had known it all along, and had refused to marry me while I was ignorant of it. But now—now I could have laughed aloud at the triumphant impossibility of her escaping me. Meanwhile I stood under Uncle Penwinkle's portrait, replying decorously to the expressions humming around me, and only conscious that if mortal power could win her Marabel now was mine. Then old McCrae rapped.

"This is practically all. Of course I was taken into Mr. Penwinkle's confidence concerning his property, when he placed it with me. The fortune was made years ago while he was in Australia, but failing to devote it to the purpose for which it was intended, he refused to touch it. It has been accumulating interest for fifty years. I need not add, Mr. Penwinkle, that our firm awaits your pleasure concerning any little matter requiring legal adjustment. Meanwhile"—he took his hat up—"I will

return the box to the Safe Deposit, and await your directions."

"Des a minute, suh—hol' on, suh, please; I got sumpin." Old Peter made forward respectfully, one hand clutching his stick, the other searching for something apparently hidden between his suspender and his ragged coat. "Dere's been so much miratin' and doin' sence Marse John died I clean fergot dis heah, 'twell I come 'long up heah wid Miss Marabel." He drew a discolored packet from his breast and handed it to the lawyer. "'Bout a monf ago Marse John say fo' me ter tek keer ob dis heah, en ef he die fust ter gib it ter de lawyer w'en he come ter settle 'bo't his property; but not 'twell den. Heah 'tis, suh!" The lawyer put his hat down and opened the packet, amid a second and deeper silence. It contained a miniature and chain; he examined the paper around it, and his hand came down upon the table again.

"Will you all remain, if you please?" His eyes sought me over their gold-rimmed spectacles. "I hold a paper written by the deceased which may materially alter the disposition of the property." There was a disturbed rustle, but I stood on the hearth-rug, thinking mainly of the look I had received from Marabel's eyes. "This is practically the will of John Davenport Penwinkle, witnessed by two persons, who are probably both alive. One is Peter Weeden—"

"Dat's me!" interpolated Peter.

"The other is William Johnson—"

"Dat's him! Mistah Billy Johnson, what carries de mail. He come ter de gate one mawnin', en Marse John he mek me fotch him in while he write his name on sumpin. He say, 'twarn't anybody's business nohow, whut he write. En Mistah Billy he put his name, and den I make my mark yonder."

"As Mr. Penwinkle was known by me to have been sane at the time, the will is certainly valid," said Lawyer McCrae. "It reads thus:

"I, John Davenport Penwinkle, being of sound mind, do make the following disposition of my property, and have my own

reasons for not placing this in a lawyer's hands, as I have lived for fifty years unknown, and prefer to die so. This shall stand as my last Will and Testament.

"To my nephew, Harrison Davenport Penwinkle, who seems disinclined to take life seriously, I bequeath the bas-relief over my chair, as a reminder that material consistencies are often signposts to mortal failures.

"The inclosed miniature, with the future care of my servant, Peter Weeden, together with the entire bulk of my property, now held in trust by Donald McCrae, I leave to my cousin, Marabel Penwinkle Lee, without restriction.

"(Signed) JOHN DAVENPORT PENWINKLE,
PETER WEEDEN (*his X mark*),
WILLIAM JOHNSON."

A blanker silence.

Then a swarm of murmurs like bees about my ears. I had been thrilled to exaltation by the possibility of Marabel being almost mine. Now I was stunned into dumbness by seeing her swept out of my reach by a fortune. In the midst of it she came hastily to the foreground, a flame on either cheek, and horror in her eyes.

"I shall never touch one penny of Uncle Penwinkle's money," she said tensely, her hand thrown out to McCrae in appeal. "I thought him poor, and only tried to help him to be more comfortable, and—and because Cousin Harry had taken the brunt of it for years, and I was a relation, too. When he told me he had money, I thought he imagined it. Then something he said made me commence to believe him. I knew that if it were true the money would go to Cousin Harry, for he is his nephew and has taken a son's place for so long. Why, he has taken care of Cousin John, made sacrifices for him"—I started to stop her, but she waved me aside—"the only one of the connection who has done anything for him. He has given him time and consideration and care. The money belongs to him—all of it—every penny! Anything else would be monstrous!"

Heavens, how beautiful she looked! A murmur of acquiescence followed her.

"Of course you'll contest it, Harry?" said Mrs. Marius.

Contest it! I contest Marabel's

right to anything life could offer her! I laughed a little as I went to her.

"Marabel, the money is yours by every right, and I am more glad for your sake than I can tell you. Do not trouble yourself about it now. As neither of us expected it, neither can be disappointed. Besides, I was much more intimate with the imp as a probable prospect."

"Poor boy; it is outrageous!" murmured Mrs. Marius; but all Marabel said was:

"I shall not touch a penny of it—not a penny!"

Cousin Marius regained his equilibrium in the atmosphere of dollars and cents, and approached Marabel encouragingly.

"Come, come, my dear! It's hard on Harry, but it can't be helped, and I'll take my oath you're the handsomest Penwinkle on record."

"Mercy, listen to your father!" murmured Mrs. Marius to Angelique.

It was growing awkward, and I suggested to McCrae that the proceedings should be curtailed, and that he should await Miss Lee's directions in the matter. There was an immediate lifting of voices in congratulation, and Mrs. Marius swept over to Marabel.

"My dear, we must see more of you! Why have you spent so much time away from us?"

"I have lived here all my life until the last two months," said Marabel. "I regret the money, and I shall not touch it. There must be some way by which it can be made over to its rightful owner."

Then she avoided my eyes, and bowed silently to one and another as they melted away into the late afternoon, amid a conflict of congratulation and condolence. The Penwinkles' purple car lingered in the road to get up its noise, while I strove with ghastly effort to express my joy over Marabel's acquisition of a fortune which swept her out of my reach. Presently it was over, and I returned alone to discover old Peter sitting disconsolately on the steps amid the drifting leaves. His hands were on his stick, and his

gray head lifted pathetically as I approached.

"Hit seems lak hit's mighty mixity, Mistah Harry. Might as well be daid ez not ter 'long nowhars."

I went in, cordially agreeing with Peter, who, according to my lights, was luckier than any one of us. I paused at the library door, chewing the bitter cud of this reflection, determined not to see Marabel again, and arguing against the inner and stronger urging that it would be cruel to leave her with no word of farewell; but cruel to whom?

Then I heard sobbing.

Heaven surely proved the fallibility of masculine armor when it forged the weapon of a woman's tears. Marabel crouched in the great chair, her arms on its arm, her face hidden and the miniature of her mother in her hands.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she moaned.

In spite of the smiling imp above her, I went forward and looked down at the miniature, which had gray eyes like Marabel's, and ruddy hair and a white throat.

"Don't, Marabel," I remarked, with originality. "Don't, child! You cannot help the money, but now you can stop working and—and enjoy"—I looked around vaguely—"yourself."

There came only a sobbing whisper. "I have no one! Oh, mother!"

Presently the sobbing ceased, and I said: "Tell me about the miniature."

"It is grandmother's," said Marabel's muffled voice. "She was engaged to marry Cousin John—so mother told me—and he went to Australia and worked, oh, so hard, and while he was gone she was forced to marry against her will, and when he returned he found her dying of a broken heart. He came here and never went out again, and nobody knew that he had money—until he told me. Once I dressed up in one of her gowns mother had kept, and it made him oh, so happy, that I did it again, and gradually he grew to talk to me as if I were she, and—and toward the last he seemed to think so. It made him

glad—the only brightness he had found in fifty years—think of it! Was it wrong? But the money—I never thought of that, except that it would be all yours—every cent!" A little sob shook her again, and she leaned back in the chair wearily. No one—except the imp—saw my lips touch a ring of bright hair in farewell.

"Marabel, I am going away," I said tritely.

"Because I have the money?" she asked, twisting her handkerchief between her fingers.

"You know that I am more than glad that you have the money—for your sake; but—good heavens, child, have you forgotten that I love you?"

"No," said Marabel faintly, "but I thought you had."

I stood resolutely away from the great chair and faced the imp.

"That one knowledge consumes me. I think of nothing else. I live upon nothing but the love of you! But I shall never ask you to marry me now—now that you are a rich woman, and I am poor. The world and life lie before you. You can choose your way, Marabel, and it is far better that you refused to listen to me three months ago."

Marabel slipped out of the chair and stood.

"When you go, Harry, I shall have no one in the world," she said softly.

"Oh, I intend to remain in the world," I said grimly. "But don't you think it would be kinder of you to make it easy for me—at least easy as you can? Seeing that I know you cannot love me, nothing can be particularly easy."

"I never said"—she commenced, but I stopped her.

"Don't! I know how far a quixotic idea about returning the money could lead you, but I have no intention of allowing you to make a move in any such direction for the cursed stuff."

Marabel came nearer, and touched my arm. It was not so easy to maintain a show of strength and indifference with her eyes scanning me.

"For the last time, Cousin Harry

—will you take Cousin Penwinkle's money?"

"Never!" I said. "And now, as we have disposed of that subject, suppose we say good-bye?"

Marabel pointed to the portrait of Uncle Penwinkle and then to the miniature in her hand.

"You are like him," she murmured, "and he said that I am like her. She—she died broken-hearted because she loved him so. My mother, too"—suddenly she covered her face, and a rosy wave swept to her brow. "You will not take the money—you say you will not ask me now—then, oh, Harry, take me! Take me!"

Her hands flew out to me, a lovely glow illuminating her. "If you leave me now, as I once had to leave you, I shall die!"

I drew Marabel's dear hands upward and scanned her face, incredulous of that discovery which nearly stopped my heart's beating because of tumultuous joy.

"You love me? Let it be nothing less! You love me, Marabel? Me? It is not that you want to give me the money?"

Then her whisper, tremulous and precious, reached me. "I waited night after night behind the firs, only to see you pass."

The dead leaves were blowing around the desolate house and old Peter crooning without, while I took Marabel to my heart under the very eyes of the imp that for so long had grinned at the inconsistencies of man, over the head of Uncle Penwinkle.



TO A BON VIVANT

OH, rich autumnal tinting of his nose,
 What radiant, rosy-tinted dreams you bring,
 Of vine-clad slopes and autumn vintaging,
 And ripe grape fragrance, sweeter than the rose!
 Dreams of old pagan days, when Bacchus goes
 All garlanded with vines, or lolls to sing,
 And, singing, slumbers, till long shadows fling
 Their cool arms eastward and the stars unclose.

What tall, moist beakers have you lingered in—
 Pagan proboscis of the sunset tip!
 But beer cools not while fancy's fingers spin
 A frail glass stem, and each remembered sip
 Warms you with blushes for some olden sin,
 You beacon-light of too-good-fellowship!

MARGARET LEE ASHLEY.



JUNIOR PARTNER—Your caller looked like a Russian.
 SENIOR PARTNER—He was.

"What was his name?"

"I don't know; he sent in his card, but the office-boy carelessly broke it off about a foot from the end."

LA FOLIE D'UN RÊVE

Par Paul Cervières

QUAND M. Marbelle, se penchant sur l'épaule de sa femme, eut murmuré : "Ma chère amie, il est deux heures !" Mme Marbelle se leva, serra quelques mains qui se tendaient à elle, échangea un long regard avec le vicomte d'Angély et, après avoir salué le maître et la maîtresse de maison, sortit suivie de son mari.

Une demi-heure après, un fiacre les déposait à leur porte.

Dans la chambre, une vieille bonne sommeillait près d'un berceau.

— Vous pouvez monter chez vous, Victoire, murmura la jeune femme en faisant glisser sur ses bras rosés les longs gants blancs.

La vieille femme s'était levée; sur le seuil de la porte, elle se retourna :

— Bébé dort; du reste, je dois dire à Madame qu'il a été fort sage!

— C'est un beau petit homme, murmura M. Marbelle, dont le visage s'éclaira; vous entendez, ma chère amie?

La jeune femme ne répondit pas. Les bras nus, ses blanches épaules émergeant d'un fouillis de gaze et de dentelle, elle s'était laissée tomber sur un divan, en proie à un accablement délicieux. La tête renversée et les yeux mi-clos, elle revivait en un rêve très doux chaque instant de cette brillante soirée, qui n'avait été qu'une suite d'hommages rendus à sa beauté.

Les accords harmonieux d'une valse à la mode chantaient en elle; elle revit la longue enfilade des salons et crut respirer encore la fine senteur des lys et des roses.

Dans la chambre voisine, M. Marbelle allait et venait; la jeune femme n'entendait pas, un frémissement de

bonheur l'agitait, elle se disait qu'elle était belle et cela était délicieux.

Certes, depuis longtemps, elle avait conscience de sa radieuse beauté. Quelle est donc la femme qui l'ignorerait? Mais, ce soir seulement, elle en avait compris toute la puissance, puisqu'elle l'avait fait, elle, femme d'un modeste commerçant, trôner en reine au milieu d'une société élégante et choisie. Et parmi tous ces hommes empressés autour d'elle, parmi tous ces hommes qui semblaient se disputer ses sourires, ses regards, un se dessinait nettement à ses yeux ravis, un revenait sans cesse à sa pensée charmée: le vicomte d'Angély.

Ce n'était pas la première fois qu'elle le rencontrait, ce jeune et spirituel vicomte; maintes fois déjà, elle s'était trouvée en sa présence, et l'empressement plein de respect que, tout d'abord, il lui témoigna, les longs et doux regards dont il la couvrit, puis, s'enhardissant, les soupirs éloquents et les pressions de main trop accentuées pour être celles d'un indifférent, lui révélèrent bientôt le sentiment tout d'amour qu'elle avait fait naître en lui.

Mme Marbelle ressentit à cette découverte une impression tout à fait dépourvue de courroux. En digne fille d'Eve, elle se sentit fière d'une telle remarque; mais, tête folle et romanesque, elle rêva trop loin. Doucement, elle eût pu repousser ces hommages, elle ne fit que les encourager, et l'élégant vicomte s'enhardit si bien qu'un soir, à la faveur d'une valse animée, il lui déclara qu'il l'adorait.

Il l'adorait, en effet! Comment ne pas aimer cette splendide créature de vingt-cinq ans à peine, divinement jo-

lie avec ses grands yeux bleu sombre et son teint d'une transparence toute enfantine?

Il s'était dit cela dès le premier regard qu'il posa sur elle, et quand un ami, lui désignant un homme petit, rougeaud et d'aspect assez vulgaire, eût murmuré: "Mon cher, voici le mari de cette ravissante créature!" il resta abasourdi; mais, revenant vite à lui, il déclara: "Vénus à Vulcain, l'antiquité est satisfaite!" Le beau vicomte dit cela, en pensant qu'il pourrait bien, à son tour, jouer le rôle d'Adonis.

Un regard jeté sur une glace voisine, qui lui refléta sa silhouette élégante, lui suffit; il sourit en relevant d'un geste familier sa fine et soyeuse moustache blonde.

Pourquoi pas!... N'était-il pas le charmeur, le beau d'Angély, comme on l'appelait, l'homme à bonnes fortunes!

— Je connais les femmes, disait-il quelquefois, et le jeu qu'il faut pour chacune!

Malheureusement, tout en exagérant un peu, le vicomte disait vrai. Des expériences assez nombreuses lui avaient permis d'acquérir une certaine habileté dans cette jolie spécialité. Peu de temps lui suffit pour saisir l'état d'âme de Mme Marbelle.

Vivant dans un bien-être aisé, qui, comparé à la vie luxueuse de quelques amies, devenait médiocrité, la jeune femme, d'abord heureuse et confiante, devint bientôt envieuse et maussade.

Elle compara aux fêtes somptueuses où on l'invitait les quelques petites soirées qu'elle donnait à son tour; elle songea que sa robe de bal, qui, certainement, sortait de chez un couturier à la mode, avait droit à tous ses égards, puisqu'elle lui devait faire la saison entière, tandis que ses amies ne les comptaient pas; enfin, que de riches équipages les ramenaient à leur hôtel, alors que, dans un affreux fiacre, elle regagnait son modeste appartement de la rue de Rome.

De suite, M. Marbelle s'aperçut du changement qui s'opérait en elle; rien de plus clairvoyant que l'amour! L'excellent homme qu'il était vit alors le danger que courait leur bonheur; douce-

ment, avec mille précautions, comme on traite un enfant malade, il essaya d'éloigner sa chère idole de ces lieux, où elle ne puisait que l'envie et la jalousie.

Peut-être y fût-il parvenu si, juste à ce moment critique, le vicomte ne leur eût été présenté.

De suite, le jeune homme devina à quelles idées, quels désirs, quelles hésitations la jeune femme était en butte; de suite aussi, il analysa les avantages qu'un tel état moral pouvait offrir à sa ligne de conduite, et, pour arriver au dénouement qu'il rêvait, il n'hésita pas à jeter par des mots, qui, sous leur semblant de naïveté, cachaient un sens toujours piquant, parla nomenclature qu'il fit des nombreux plaisirs, apanage de la fortune qu'elle n'avait pas et qu'elle désirait si ardemment, par des comparaisons, des remarques qui allaient droit au cœur de la jeune femme et en ravivaient alors les désirs un instant calmés, à jeter dans cet esprit déjà faussé le doute et la dissipation.

Mme Marbelle respira à tel point cet air empoisonné que tous les égards, toute la patience, toute la tendre sollicitude d'un mari qui l'adorait ne triomphèrent pas de sa résistance. Il souffrait en silence, le pauvre homme, et, ce soir encore, lui seul savait son martyre, lorsque sa femme, au bras du vicomte, était passée devant lui sans le voir, uniquement occupée de ce que murmurait le bellâtre!

Longtemps son regard les suivit et, tout à coup, plus rien: ils avaient disparu.

Il se sentit alors horriblement malheureux et seul; des larmes lui montèrent aux yeux; par un suprême effort, il les refoula, et là-bas, dans le petit boudoir tout tendu de broché rose, le vicomte d'Angély serrait dans les siennes la petite main de Mme Marbelle. Pour la trentième fois, peut-être, il répétait les mêmes paroles: "Décidément, c'était un rêve, la merveilleuse jeune femme qu'elle était n'appartenait pas à cet homme qu'il apercevait au loin... elle, la grâce, la beauté, la jeunesse!... allons donc! Certes, M. Marbelle était un homme loyal et bon, mais combien en était-il de jeunes,

d'élégants qui eussent été trop heureux de mettre à ses pieds nom et fortune? Est-ce que cela ne se voyait pas tous les jours, avec des créatures moins superbement douées!... Et tenez, qu'avait donc qu'elle n'eût pas celle qui les recevait aujourd'hui, cette baronne de Rigny? Moins de jeunesse, moins de beauté; quant à la fortune, c'était connu, le baron l'avait épousée par amour!"

"Épousée par amour!" Ces trois mots ne quittaient pas l'esprit de Mme Marbelle, et quand le vicomte, baisant passionnément cette fois la petite main qui ne se défendait pas, reprit de sa belle voix bien timbrée: "Madame, madame, pourquoi ne vous ai-je pas connue plus tôt!..." la jeune femme sentit gronder en elle une sourde colère. Oui, pourquoi ne l'avait-elle pas connu plus tôt?

Il l'attira à lui et, comme elle se penchait, elle aperçut son mari, là-bas, à l'entrée du grand salon. Debout, il s'appuyait à l'embrasement de la porte, dans une attitude à la fois lasse et triste. Elle éprouva comme un remords, qui allait décroissant à mesure qu'elle le détaillait, si laid, si vulgaire, si vieux déjà. Près d'elle, presque à genoux, un sourire plissant sa lèvre moqueuse, le vicomte attendait. Mme Marbelle ferma les yeux et tendit à son baiser son joli front frissonnant.

"Épousée par amour!" Maintenant, toujours étendue sur le divan, elle répétait ces mots.

C'était vrai pourtant: la baronne de Rigny, autrefois Mlle Valentine Regnault, avait été épousée par amour. Elle avait, aujourd'hui, un hôtel à Paris, un château en province, une horde de serviteurs et un mari charmant. Qu'avait-elle, elle, reine de beauté?

Ah! folle, folle qu'elle était! Com-

ment avait-elle pu s'unir ainsi, comment!

Plus colère maintenant, elle se rappelait le temps de ses fiançailles. C'est qu'elle était heureuse, elle, la petite modeste, d'épouser ce commerçant aisé; elle aussi, aux yeux de sa famille, aux yeux des amies de ce temps-là, passait pour avoir fait un beau mariage.

Un beau mariage! Elle eût un sourire plein d'amertume.

Et juste à ce moment l'enfant pleura dans son petit nid blanc. Elle eût un mouvement de colère, elle toujours si tendre, et comme elle restait encore à demi couchée, M. Marbelle entra dans la chambre, se pencha sur le berceau et, saisissant dans ses mains maladroites le joli baby qui pleurait, se mit à le bercer doucement.

La jeune femme releva la tête, elle vit son mari qui, avec des précautions infinies, tenait l'enfant et baisait son joli front nimbé d'or, et le groupe que formaient ce gros homme et ce délicat enfant blond, qui eût peut-être fait sourire l'élégant vicomte, l'émut jusqu'aux larmes.

Peu à peu, ses traits contractés se détendirent, son regard s'adoucit, sa bouche quitta le pli amer qui la faisait méchante, et comme M. Marbelle murmurait: "Ne pleure plus, mon mignon, ne pleure plus, tu vas fatiguer ta maman, ta jolie petite maman!" Mme Marbelle se leva, hésitante et le front baissé, courut à son mari, et comme il la regardait, éperdu de la voir en larmes, elle, comprenant toute la folie de son rêve, comparant dans une vision très nette, là-bas, l'amour violent, mais passager et dégradant, et là, le devoir, doublé du vrai, du paisible, de l'éternel bonheur, pencha sa tête ravissante sur son épaule en murmurant:

— Voulez-vous m'embrasser aussi, mon ami?... pour me consoler!



ETHEL—Wouldn't you like to be a celebrated writer and be paid a dollar a word?

JESS—Well, if I were I would write a story with a man in it who stuttered.

BALLADE OF FUTURE TIMES

IN years to come when we are dead
 They'll have new things we shall not share;
 They'll laugh at these our days, then fled,
 They'll have winged ships to cleave the air,
 And lotions that will grow new hair—
 Things now to which we have small clue.
 Comforts they'll have at which we'd stare:
In love they will have nothing new.

Why shines aurora overhead,
 Why sun-spots come and go, and where
 The road lies which so long misled
 Our polar wights who ice-fields dare—
 Their wise men all these shall declare,
 And how hay-fever to subdue;
 They'll know all which is our despair:
In love they will have nothing new.

They'll ask the Martians why they're red;
 The stubborn circle they will square,
 And cure the ills that now we dread.
 They'll deem our life a small affair;
 Diamonds they'll make beyond compare;
 Have better ways to bake and brew,
 New things to eat, to drink, to wear:
In love they will have nothing new.

ENVOY

Prince, though a thousand things which ne'er
 We've known to these folk shall accrue,
 A fig for it all! Why should we care?—
In love they will have nothing new!

HAYDEN CARRUTH.



IN THE FIFTH AVENUE PARADE

RESPECTABLE DEACON—I wish that young Canon Mayberry weren't obliged to preach to such a small congregation.
 FRIVOLOUS WIDOW—So do I. Every time he said "Dearly beloved" this morning I felt as if I had received a proposal.

THE ROMANCE AT HOLLYWOOD COLLEGE

By Anne O'Hagan

MISS TORRINGTON, on a day when wisdom had been born with great travail in her soul, had determined so to apportion the activities of her life as to leave no leisure for remembrances. A strong constitution had enabled her to do this without paying for forgetfulness by physical collapse, and several generations of good breeding had saved her from the appearance of feverishness and bustle which crowded days deplorably produce in most women. At Hollywood College, to whose renown she contributed by being the earliest prophet of a certain comet, she was regarded as the luckiest possible model for the students. The quality of her mind was fine, her industry notable; moreover, she was beautiful after a rather statuesque, un-aging fashion, and her clothes and her manner had a distinction which was held to be not only worthy of emulation, but provocative of it as well. To be sure, an observer who piqued himself upon his cleverness once described her as a woman whose face was saved from acknowledged tragedy only by means as strenuous as those which save some women's from the admission of age. But for the most part the cleverness of Hollywood was not psychologic.

On this particular Thursday evening in April an unusual failure to dovetail her engagements had left Miss Torrington with an unscheduled hour upon her hands. By no chance could the Thursday evening influx of visitors begin before eight; even the most eager of freshmen had learned by April that Miss Torrington's "eight until eleven"

was to be interpreted accurately. Her dinner guest had failed her and her own appetite had rebelled against more than twenty minutes at the table. She had wandered aimlessly through her small establishment—the elegance of her housekeeping on the first floor of Mrs. West's square, old, colonial house was one of the joys of Hollywood—she had retouched the flowers in the bowls of brass and iridescent glass, she had poked the aromatic wood upon the hearth, she had snuffed the candles and readjusted the curtains, until her unaccustomed fidgeting disgusted her. She had cut the pages of the new review and stared at them unseeingly. She had begun to play upon the piano, but some impish attendant of memory had made her sound the notes of a measure she had forbidden her fingers for a long time.

With a sudden gesture of determination she went into her study. She would face her situation, not try to evade it. Above the panel in the centre of her old mahogany desk there was a little illuminated text characteristic of her. "Resolve, and you are free," she read, and nodded. Nevertheless her hands shook a little as she inserted a key into one of the locked compartments. She drew forth a letter, stiff, heavy, new, unworn in its creases.

It was a proposal of marriage, dignified, honest, admiring, from the president of the big university in the State. She stared at it a long time, considering what it meant as she had half considered all day—an honest admiration, a dignified affection, an intellectual companionship stimulating and de-

lightful, a fuller human experience than any unmarried woman might have, an existence in the aristocracy of scholarship. She held her empty hand out as though to weigh against the letter all that a refusal would mean to her. Then her eyes turned grudgingly toward a panel in her desk and dwelt for a rebellious second upon an inlaid rose that did not match the others in the border. Then she yielded and, with lips a little gray, leaned forward and pressed the rose. The secret panel that some old artificer in woods had pleased himself to make two centuries before slid back, and the past that Miss Torrington had arranged her whole life to ignore fell forward in a packet of letters and papers.

Her own picture was there, showing a face as proud as the one Hollywood knew, but brilliant with an ardor and a sweetness that the college had never seen. The man's face that had lain against it in the recess was eager, winning; the young head was poised debonairly as if its owner had set forth to conquer the world with a laugh and a lute and a rose; the eager eyes, the young mouth, smiled confidently, contagiously. She held the card away from her at arm's length and she groaned. The letters she did not touch, but some newspaper clippings she unfolded and looked at bitterly. The roughly engraved caricature of the young face looked back at her; beside it was printed a woman's, supercilious and pretty: it seemed to Miss Torrington that she could see in the reproduced photograph all the mingling of cold vanity and tempestuous impulse which made some women the inspiration of the sin and misery of the whole world.

The printed story she knew by heart—how the great Western senator had been doubly deceived by his young secretary and protégé. Oh, it was a hideous story enough of a forged signature, of a woman's shamed, hard-wrung confession of a half-guilty intrigue—ugh! Alma Torrington shook with the rage and the repulsion which had driven her nearly mad ten years be-

fore when the newspapers one morning had opened upon her unprepared eyes that tale of the treachery of the man to whom she was engaged.

She pushed the papers back into the recess and slid the panel forward; again the inlaid rose hid the record of misery and shame. She drew a sheet of her crested paper out of a pigeon-hole and began to write.

"Dear Doctor Donald." She paused to dally half shrinkingly with the notion of a more intimate beginning. Then she heard the heavy fall of the knocker against the door; she glanced at the clock—it was not yet quite eight. She turned again to her writing, but heavy steps followed the maid's light, tapping ones down the corridor. A breathless presentiment of horror came upon her, and she rose to meet whatever was to appear. The curtains slid back, the servant's voice mumbled a name and a man stood staring at her across the orderly, spacious beauty of the room—a man whose pallor was the unmistakable white of cells, whose face was deeply lined, but from whose eyes glowed some unquenchable, sullen fire of pride and resentment.

They looked at each other, and silence seemed to smother them until, with a plash like a heavy stone falling into some rippleless pool, her name fell from his lips:

"Alma!"

Still she did not speak nor move. Then the knocker fell heavily once more and the clock began to chime the hour. She looked wildly about. A hooded cape she sometimes wore in crossing the campus lay on the sofa. She caught it, threw open the long window upon the back piazza, and made a frantic gesture toward it. And while the servant drew near to announce the first of the evening visitors, two stumbling figures fled through the soft, dark April night across the garden, through the hedge and out into the quiet village road.

There was a low stone wall about one of the great Hollywood estates on which, during the ten months of the

year when the owners were testing the merits of their other residences, much of the humbler courtship of the town proceeded. Often on her late afternoon walks Miss Torrington had smiled with amused tolerance upon the couples perched along it, like birds upon a telegraph wire. Now she paused in her breathless flight at a spot where the darkness seemed densest and the equidistant arc lights only intensified the circle of blackness.

"Now tell me," she whispered fiercely as she sank upon the broad top of the wall, "tell me—why did you come?"

The hood of her cloak fell back; her lifted face shone white and wild in the darkness; the tragedy that her eyes had veiled so long stared nakedly forth in her upward look.

"I came," he answered doggedly, unemotionally, "to tell you that I never did that thing. I will not go away until you believe me. It has kept me going all these years in prison—don't shrink at the word, I've been through the thing—the thought that I should make you listen and believe. I tell you I did not do it!"

"You mean—?" Her whisper broke and floated away among the spring odors.

"I did not forge that signature. I did not do it. Do you hear me? You've got to believe me—got to! Me, mind you, and because I tell you it. Just my word you've got to take. I did not forge that signature!"

Rough, insistent, monotoned, his voice carried a fierce emotion which no vehemence could have conveyed. The tense attitude of the woman, her eyes strained upward through the darkness, suddenly relaxed.

"That!" she cried, with a gesture of repudiation, of contempt. "That! What do I care for that?"

He stared stupidly down upon her for an instant. Then, as though suddenly unnerved, he sank down beside her.

"What do you mean? What do you mean?"

"Do you suppose I believed that?"

she cried. "Do you suppose I care about that? What difference—? Oh, you dull, you dull—you Man! Crime? If you had told me you were innocent, would I not have believed you? If you had told me you were guilty, would I not have striven for you, helped you, waited—saved you at last? Oh, dull, dull——"

"Then in God's name, Alma," he entreated her, "why did you make no sign? No sign, not a word, not a line, not a look! Oh, that was bitter, that was the hell of it. And I would have suffered twenty hells rather than plead with you then, rather than tell you I was innocent. You should have known it, I said, as I would have known the truth of you; and so you should have, so you should have. I—a forger? Why, why did you treat me so?"

"You seem to forget"—her voice was cold, controlled again, like the voice her idle pupils sometimes knew—"that the same paper which announced your arrest told of your—your—affair with that woman!"

It was his turn to look at her with amazement, to echo her "that!"

"That! What else? You—engaged to me, and your letters to her published there in that same paper. She your 'dear lady,' she your 'royal mistress,' she your 'madame most gracious and well beloved'—oh, did you think that I could forget that? From you? And you made no sign, gave no explanation. I dare say I might have believed you!"

"And for an idle, silly flirtation, masquerade of hearts, a flower or two, a hand pressure, a conservatory-set scene to flatter a woman's vanity—oh, have the worst! a kiss to flutter a man's pulse—for that you threw me over, let me go through that damnation without one sign? You, so pitiful! Oh, it's unbelievable—and you pretend you would have forgiven the black dishonor, the disgrace, the crime, if I had been guilty of it! For I was not, I tell you. Tomorrow you'll know—tomorrow all the world will know for whom she ruined me, to

shield whom she condemned me to those years, that shame. But tonight you must believe me, me myself!"

She brushed aside his earnestness.

"And I would have, I would have forgiven the crime," she cried. "What was that to me? But the other—Oh, I loved you and you could play at love with another woman!"

They had risen and stood looking at each other, man and woman, the irreconcilable. Their mutually incomprehensible standards of honor lay

balanced in the great scales of destiny. Pride, loneliness, the desolation of life, waited to engulf them. Then nature broke something in the woman's heart; she threw out her hands with a sob.

"I cannot bear it," she whispered. "I cannot bear it. I am so lonely!"

And nature woke the protector in the man.

"Alma!" he cried, and drew her, shaken and defeated, into the circle of his arms.



IN GADARA

DO you recall, sweet, how the spring
Came up the glade of Gadara,
With bourgeoning and blossoming
As in the gardens of the Shah—
How morning from her gold-bright wing
Flushed height and depth in Gadara?

How all the poppy beacons flared,
And every rathe anemone;
How all the lovely lupins shared
The heaven's turquoise clarity—
And blush-fair oleanders dared
Their banners toss—a rosy sea?

And, sweet, do you remember, too,
The bird voice in the carob bough—
Some magic minstrel hid from view,
Vow lifting after lyric vow?—
A troubadour who knew the clue
To ope love's heart-gate—when and how?

Blithe, very blithe, the world seemed then—
(O golden day in Gadara!)
The sky that leaned above the glen
So like your eyes that wooed me; ah,
Would we might live it o'er again,
That day of days in Gadara!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



WHEN a woman starts an idle rumor it at once ceases to be idle.

ENDEMIC

By Gouverneur Morris

But soon a wonder came to light
That showed the rogues they lied:
The man recovered of the bite—
The dog it was that died.

FOR a wonder, the cholera scare in the plains that season was worse than its bite. There had been enough heat, irritability and fear to warrant a decimation of the entire population; but for some reason best known to itself, the cholera hung fire and remained endemic. Still there were many deaths, as Tyson duly reported to his paper in Calcutta and to a girl in the hills. To the latter he wrote:

I cannot get away now. At any moment there may be big news. Eighteen died yesterday in Jongualla. And this morning a private in B Company went out in a cloud of suspicion. Stedman says dysentery and looks wise, but some of us think this is just a bluff to keep nerves quiet. I have annexed a terrier for you. Private Hawkins brought him to me last night in a bread-sack, and said that he had come by him honestly. The heat is frightful. In fact, it's just as hot as it was this time last year and the year before. There is a Cingalese hanging about here with a big ruby in the rough. I can answer for the color. He wants eighty pounds for it, and it looks cheap. I'm no judge of stones, but if you've got that much to spare you might take a chance. We are all working hard to keep amused. Colonel Maud is giving a dinner and card party tonight. I don't like him; he's an old rake, but I'm going. . . . When am I coming up? I don't know. In three weeks the heat should break up. If we can keep the sickness quiet till then I can get away. Tell me, is it cool and shady on the Khabool road? What are you reading? Has the yellow pony been fired? You should have the callas taken up, separated and replanted. I shot a wonderful bird the other day, with a black and gold breast almost as soft as eider. Would you like it for a bonnet or something? Brown & Helturing are making a collection of my stories to be issued Christmas-time. If

they go—but it's too hot to expect that. When the fates strike up on their fiddles heat dances with despair, cold with hope. The colonel has just galloped up to his bungalow and rushed in. Something must have happened or he wouldn't have galloped. Will you wait a moment, please, while I get the news? . . .

Tyson took up his helmet and stepped through a window to the burnt clay veranda. A very sweaty native, looking like a mass of old bedclothes, rose at his approach and bowed over and over again.

"May it please your charitableness—"

"Who are you? I remember. You are Jouglot. How are you? You've had cholera in Logput. Family well?"

"We come about a tiger," said Jouglot. "Such a tiger has been unknown until this time. Look, we have made a tracing of his print upon this cloth. Already he has taken two bullocks and a child."

"That's a big cat," said Tyson quietly. "Where is he?"

"As your charitableness knows," said Jouglot, "we dwell with our wife and children in an outlying house."

"He's nosing round your place, is he?" said Tyson. "Tell me this—has there been any cholera in your house?"

Jouglot wriggled uncomfortably.

"The fact is too publicly known," he said, "for me to lie to your esteemed patronship. We have lost a very small child by the cholera—but there could be brought a tent to be set at a distance from the house."

"Who else has been sick in your house?"

"I cannot lie," said Jouglot. "We have lost our eldest and the sister of our wife's mother. But she was an old

woman upon whom the sickness sat lightly."

"Have you reported to the doctor?"

"May it please your charitableness, we have but one house, and the doctor would cause it to be burned. It is well known that our youngest and our eldest and the sister of our wife's mother died in three ways. When the well-beam became dislodged and fell, our youngest, who was building a temple of pebbles and marigolds, was crushed. When the sister of our wife's mother was reaching up to pull plantains she trod upon Khraib, who bit her in the heel so that she doubled and died. Our eldest——"

"That will do," said Tyson; "I will give you an answer in the morning. Have you seen the tiger?"

"Twice," said Jouglot. "But he is rather an elephant than a tiger, being vast and terrible and astute."

Tyson crossed the white, quivering road to the colonel's bungalow.

"Hello, Tyson, come in," called the colonel.

"I saw you ride up, colonel. Any news that you can give out?"

"I'm saving it for tonight," said the colonel. "But I'll tell you if you won't divulge."

"You don't look as if it were bad news," said Tyson. "You—you look as if you'd been ordered to the hills."

"Better," said the colonel; "I'm going to be married."

Colonel Maud's quick eye detected an expression that was not enthusiasm curve about the corners of Tyson's mouth.

"Look here, Tyson," he said, "I know you're a purist and all that. A man can't cover his reputation, and mine's bad about—about women, but I'll be a good husband to her, and I'm not so damned old."

Tyson remembered that Colonel Maud had been a good husband once before. But he did his best to smile pleasantly.

"I was taken aback," he said. "I—well, somehow you're not the sort of man whose engagement one expects to hear of, colonel." He laughed. "But as long as it isn't my sis-

ter"—he held out his hand—"I hope you'll both be very happy. Truly I do. Who is she?"

"Marion Paul," said Colonel Maud.

The smile lingered on Tyson's face, and he finished shaking hands with the colonel.

"Marion Paul," he said. He drew a deep breath, and the letter which he had thrust in an unfinished state into his breast-pocket crackled.

"Funny," he said, "I was just writing to her." He pulled out the letter. "I must add a paragraph of—congratulations."

"You look white," said the colonel; "will you have a peg?"

"Thanks," said Tyson.

"Do you mind if I don't join you? I can't drink; I mean I must not. A man who doesn't take care of himself up to my age has to be careful. I can't afford to get sick now—can I?"

"Not very well," said Tyson. He poured some Scotch whisky into a long glass and filled it up with warm soda-water. "Here's how." He gulped down two or three inches of the stuff. "Give me a cigarette, will you?"

"By the way," said the colonel, "there will be cards tonight. Would you rather play whist or poker?"

"Whist," said Tyson.

"I thought so; I've listed you to play with Farrallone, Connor and Stedman, if he can get off."

"Stedman ought not to sit up and play cards," said Tyson; "he needs every ounce of sleep and brains he's got just now."

"Good man, the doctor," said Colonel Maud; "he's fixed me up once or twice."

Tyson's gorge rose.

"But I'm sound as a bank," the colonel went on. "I tell you, Tyson, I feel rejuvenated. When a man wants a girl and——"

"Yes, the luck's with you, isn't it?" said Tyson. He finished his drink in three gulps. "Hope it lasts. I'm—I want to see Stedman a minute if I can find him. See you tonight."

A strong shudder seized Tyson as he crossed the road.

"My God!" he thought, "I'm young and I'm clean—and I'm done for. She—she—no, it isn't her fault. Damn him! the women run to him."

He stopped suddenly, thought a minute and started back to the colonel's bungalow. "It mustn't be allowed," he said.

"May I trouble you again, colonel. Thanks. It's like this. I've promised Miss Paul a tiger-rug. Jougnot—a man I've hunted with, good hunter, too—has got one out in his back—I mean in the jungle back of his house; hell of a big one. Don't want to miss the hunt, but rug's no affair of mine. Can't you get off tomorrow for a little hunt? Two days and a night. Get him sure. You send Miss Paul the rug and our compliments. Better do it; you need an outing."

"If nothing turns up," said the colonel, "I might get off. Is it far?"

"No, near Logput."

"They've had cholera there."

"Yes, but this is some miles from the village. We'll put up at Jougnot's. Turn the family out and all that."

"I believe I'll go," said the colonel, "but I can't be sure just yet. You understand. But you look as though you ought to be in bed. Feel bad?"

Tyson shook his head. "A little heat sick," he said. "We should start about three; there's sometimes a breath of cool then."

He went slowly from the colonel's to the doctor's. The doctor happened to be in. He was busy weighing out doses of opium.

"Stedman," said Tyson, "can you talk while you do that?"

"Yep," said Stedman; "what about?"

"It's just this," said Tyson; "I'm making a cholera story—not a newspaper story, but fiction—and I want facts. Suppose a man used bedding that someone had had cholera in, would he take it?"

"Medical faculty dispute the point," said Stedman. "But if I wanted to live I wouldn't try it."

"Suppose," said Tyson, "a man *had* to do it, and was at the same time

anxious to live, and in reach of precautions, what ones ought he to take?"

"It's largely a question of guts," said Stedman. "Do you want revolting details?"

"Yes," said Tyson, "I do."

The doctor talked steadily for five minutes, and Tyson took notes. "But you can't put these things in a story," he finished. "You're neither Zola nor a sewer."

"No," said Tyson, "but it helps to know all there is to know. Then if a man——"

"He would be as nearly immune as our present knowledge can make him. Cheer up, man, you look as if you were going to sleep in infected bedding yourself."

Tyson laughed rather dismally.

"Now that we are at it," he said, "explain to me how it is that an old debauchee like Colonel Maud pulls through season after season of cholera, while strong young men die?"

"I don't know," said Stedman, "unless he's so rotten that germs won't have anything to do with him. He's seen more cholera than any man in India. Lucky he don't take it. He'd go out like a blown match."

"Good deal of a wreck, I suppose," said Tyson.

"What can you expect?" said Stedman. "Think what he's been."

"Suppose," said Tyson, "you had a daughter, and the colonel asked you for her——?"

"I'd tell him to go to hell," said the doctor. "Why?"

"I promised not to tell," said Tyson, "but I will. He's going to be married. Don't say anything, please."

"No, of course not. Who?"

"He's going to tell everybody tonight—Marion Paul."

Stedman put down his scales for a moment and looked Tyson steadily in the eyes.

"Shoe pinch a little?"

Tyson returned the look without wavering.

"Good Lord! no—but it seems a pity."

"Damn shame," said the doctor.

"What is there about him that wins 'em so, doctor?"

"I don't know, unless it is that a woman isn't happy unless she's getting the better of rivals. A woman who could keep the colonel faithful to her would have good reason to wear feathers in her hat. I understand she's rich?"

"Very comfortable," said Tyson. He rose. "Believe we're playing at the same table tonight. Hope I get you for my partner."

"Hope so too," said the doctor. "Look here, man, you've had a drink. I smelled it when you came in. Cut 'em out. You can't afford to take chances this weather."

Jougnot's family had vacated their house in favor of Tyson and Colonel Maud and gone into camp at some distance in a grove of plantains. Tyson and the colonel sat in the open smoking, their helmets on the ground beside them, for the sun had set. It was cruelly hot, and the smell from the Jougnots' camp added to the discomfort. Tyson looked white and sick. Colonel Maud pulled out his watch and looked at it.

"Our truck ought to be up, Tyson," he said. "I believe I could turn in and sleep creditably."

"Something must have happened," said Tyson, "because my man Rama is always very exact. When Jougnot returns we'll send him out on the back trail. After all, this place isn't the easiest in the world to find."

"I'm hungry," said the colonel, "and sleepy."

"There's a lot of Jougnot's bedding inside," said Tyson. "You won't need much over you."

"Not this weather. But I prefer my own bedding. Listen, that's a horse."

"There ought to be two," said Tyson. "No, it is Rama; where's the black, I wonder?"

A lean native in a white turban and precious little else came out of the jungle, leading a pack-horse. When he saw Tyson he began to gesticulate and shrug his shoulders.

"Where's the black, Rama?" Tyson called.

Rama halted a few paces from them and began to bow vigorously.

"Worshipful," he said, "within three miles of this place a devil entered the black so that he broke his leading rope and went home. I pursued for an hour, and, although at no time did he hurry, I was unable to catch him. Thinking, therefore, that the rifles and cartridges, and even the food—though in this weather it is too hot to eat—were more important than the quilts, I gave up the attempt and hurried on."

"You ought to be kicked," said Tyson.

Rama grinned and bowed.

"I don't like to punish him, colonel," said Tyson. "It's the first time he ever failed me. Get those packs off, Rama, and give us something to eat."

An hour later, while Colonel Maud was finishing his smoke, Tyson and Jougnot went into the house to make up a couple of beds. The house was lighted by one battered lantern. Tyson shuddered every now and then like a man who has taken cold.

"This house is very filthy, Jougnot," he said.

"We have lived in it so long," explained Jougnot.

"Which are the quilts that—that they died in?"

"They are in the far corner, where they can do no harm."

"I'm going to sleep on them, as a favor to the Doctor Sahib. He has made me proof against cholera."

Jougnot disentangled the quilts and began to spread them.

"Put the green one on top," said Tyson; "it looks cleaner than the others."

Jougnot did as he was told.

"It was the one upon which our wife's mother's sister died," said Jougnot, giving it a pat.

"Are these other quilts clean?"

"The chocolate and the red have never been in contact with sickness. The brown was our father's bed, who died of the smallpox; but that was nearly two years ago."

"What filthy beasts you are, aren't you?" said Tyson.

"Yes, indeed," said Jouglot agreeably.

"Put the chocolate one on the floor and spread the red one over it. We must start a little after midnight."

Jouglot finished the bed-making, and, rising, laid his hand lightly on Tyson's shoulder.

"Sahib Tyson," he said, "we have hunted tiger together, and we are both brave men who do not fear death; but you are a young man, sahib, and the cholera is a strong sickness. Among the plantains the ground is dry and not hard. Do not sleep in this house."

Tyson laughed nervously.

"It's a—a bet, Jouglot," he said.

Jouglot pointed out of the door with his thumb.

"Does *he* know?" he said.

Tyson pulled a venomous-looking Mauser pistol from his hip-pocket.

"No," he said.

"Why threaten among friends," said Jouglot peacefully, "and who are we to ask for Tyson Sahib's reasons? Tell me this—does he lie down with death or do you?"

"To each his own fate," quoted Tyson enigmatically.

"Now we will go," said Jouglot; "it may be that our wife is already dead."

"What do you mean?"

"She has been sick five hours; but we have dosed her heavily with opium, so that her cries might not break in upon the peacefulness of the sahib's evening."

"I will come over and look at her," said Tyson promptly; "I have some medicine. Don't wait."

Jouglot bowed and went out.

When he was alone Tyson leaned against the wall of the house, breathing hard. He heard Colonel Maud calling to him, but did not answer.

Colonel Maud, having called twice to ask if the beds were ready without receiving an answer, emptied his pipe, placed it in his pocket, rose with a yawn and strolled toward the house. Coming near he heard a faint moaning, and broke into a run. He found Tyson

writhing on the floor like a thing that has been run over and received an injury to its spine. Colonel Maud's first thought was—"snake bite."

He knelt and took Tyson strongly by the shoulders. Tyson stopped writhing for a moment. His teeth were set, and his words came through them slowly, with a sputter of light froth.

"Get . . . out," he said. "This . . . house . . . full . . . cholera . . . brought you . . . purpose."

"Stuff!" said Colonel Maud. He lifted Tyson in his arms and laid him on the green bed. "He's got it right enough," he said to himself; "thought he looked sick yesterday." Aloud he said, "You've got a touch of colic," and he took a little medicine-case from his breast-pocket. Then he dosed Tyson with opium and sugar of lead, and later with opium and ratanhia.

In about an hour Tyson's jaws loosened and he felt no pain. Then he begged Colonel Maud to listen to him and afterward to go away.

"It's pretty bad, colonel," he finished.

"Yes, it's pretty bad," said the colonel; "so bad that I don't take it in, quite. But you've misjudged me, Tyson; I've got some good traits. Those were ugly stories, I know, about the way I treated my wife; but it didn't seem dignified to go about contradicting them. There was a good deal to be said on both sides. But she spread the stories and told her side. If my side had been told we would have had to figure in divorce proceedings. If you wish me to be specific, I may as well tell you that she was an intimate friend of your father's. But you didn't make a row when *he* married again, did you? No. It isn't fair, my boy, to judge by hearsay. But I forgive you, if that's what you want. In your right mind you wouldn't have tried to—to do what you did try. You were sick, and the heat blistered your moral sense—God! I thought we'd stopped that."

Colonel Maud dosed Tyson with sugar of lead and strychnine. "I wish I had ice," he thought.

"You must fight with your head, Tyson."

"I want to die."

Colonel Maud groaned.

"As a reparation, Tyson," he said, "I want you to try and pull through. I'm doing all I know for you, but you've got to help."

"There's nothing for me," said Tyson.

"Oh, yes, there is; it's your duty to live and, if I don't make her a good husband to put a bullet in me."

"You will make her a good husband," said Tyson. "You're as gentle as a woman, and forgiving. If she is not happy it will be her own fault."

An hour later he said, quite dispassionately but with real interest:

"Give me your candid opinion; do you think I will go to hell? I am terribly sorry for what I have done. Is that enough, do you think?"

"Plenty," said Colonel Maud in an assured voice. And later, "Look here, man, will you try to pull through or not?"

"I'm trying to try," said Tyson, "but it's no good. Make Jouglot and Rama dig a hole for me somewhere in the shade, and if it isn't too much trouble, you might say, 'God have mercy on him,' over me. Give my love to Farrallone and Stedman. Tell Stedman I'm sorry I revoked last night. I beg your pardon, but if you don't give me something I shall have to scream."

Colonel Maud dosed Tyson with opium.

"You've been awfully good to me," said Tyson presently. "Do you think it would be a travesty for us to shake hands?"

"Delighted, I'm sure," said the colonel.

They shook hands.

"By the way," said Tyson, "there's sixty-five pounds in a tin despatch-box locked up in my bungalow. Wish you'd take it and find a Cingalese that's hanging round Cantonement. He's got a nice ruby. He wants eighty pounds for it. But I'd like very much to give it to her for—for a wedding present. If he won't take the sixty-five—it's all I've got in the world—could—would you mind awfully making up the difference and telling her it was from me? Then there's a black-and-gold bird breast, cured with arsenic; she might like that. . . . If it's true that dying men know things, colonel, I can guarantee that no harm will come to you from this night's work. . . . How long have I been sick?"

"About five hours."

Tyson sighed.

"Well," he said, "I think I'll be going."

Jouglot appeared in the door.

"May it please your benevolence, our wife is dead, and Tyson Sahib said that he wished to start a little after midnight."

Among other things Colonel Maud found an unfinished letter in Tyson's pockets. When he had read it he burned it, but for a long time the concluding sentence remained in his memory:

The colonel has just galloped up to his bungalow and rushed in. Something must have happened, or he wouldn't have galloped. Will you wait a moment, please, while I get the news? . . .

APRIL

"HOW is it you are smiling, dear,
With both your eyes a-trickle?"
"Alas! 'tis all too soon, I fear,
To let my little Buds appear;
By now each restless prisoner,
Begins my foot to tickle;
And once to laugh, if I begin,
They know I cannot keep them in!"

JOHN B. TABB.

AUSTRALIA'S LARK

By Frances de Wolfe Fenwick

"**I**T might," said Texas. "If one had the good, working cheek," she added reflectively.

"No 'cheek' would be necessary," opined Boston reprovingly. "If one had the necessary self-possession, sufficient anxiety to ascertain exactly the average man's opinion of such a procedure and sufficient enterprise to put one's theories to the test, nothing could be simpler."

"That's what I said," retorted Texas unabashed.

Boston subsided with a sniff. I looked at Australia wonderingly. Australia had not spoken for fully three minutes, which is not Australia's way.

Australia is five-feet-eight, athletic, healthy, graceful, stately, large-eyed—all that a girl should be, in my opinion. (I am small, thin, dark and insignificant.) Texas is plump, blue-eyed, daring, mirthful, irrepressible. Boston is slender, courteous, psychological and very tailor-made.

We had met on a steamer bound for England, and had speedily formed a fast friendship. One night we were sitting on deck, earnestly discussing the time-honored problem: "Should a woman propose?"

"I don't know whether a woman *should* propose," Australia said at length, "but I know one woman who *did*. She proposed three times and was refused every time."

"And you call her a woman!" I cried in horror.

"Oh, but, Australia, you understand, don't you, that I was not referring to *that* sort of woman?"

"It was me—I mean I!" Australia placidly rejoined.

"You!"

"Oh, Australia, what rub——!"

"What in the world——?"

"Now, what is the matter with you all? Of course I know how funny it must sound; but, after all, why shouldn't I have proposed to three men if I wanted to? I have more to offer an average man than he has to offer me. And why shouldn't I offer it?—that is, if I feel like it. I did feel like proposing, but—this will puzzle you a bit, I expect—I did *not* feel like being accepted. In fact, I don't know what I should have done if one of them had accepted me, for I was engaged already."

Texas got her breath first. "Australia, I thought I would do more for a lark than any girl living, but I take off my hat to you. You're it!"

"I don't believe Australia viewed it as a lark," said Boston reflectively. "I think I understand her better than you do. It was the psychological experiment that appealed to her. She wanted to see what the effect would be. I know exactly why she did it."

"You're both right, ladies," Australia laughed. "I did it for a lark and I did it for an experiment. Do you want to hear all about it? I knew you would. I'll begin at the very beginning, and if I get long-winded and tiresome—well, I know you'll stop me, anyway. In the first place, as I have told you several times, I am going to marry Mr. Lowe Maynard this August. Now, my father is one of the richest men in Sydney and keeps open house, besides which I have traveled and been entertained in half the cities of Europe. I am now twenty-eight. So you can form some idea of the number

of men I have known. I have had money, family, position, good looks, good health, good spirits and numberless opportunities for conquest; and I can conscientiously say that I have always made the most of these. I had never till last winter visited the States, though I have always wanted to, and—I am ashamed to confess this—but, fond as I am of Lowe, I did long to have one last 'good time' before I settled down.

"Now, on account of my advantages, I have had a good many offers, so there was nothing new in the idea of flirting desperately and inducing a few men to propose to me; but I did think there would be something absolutely unique and enjoyable in picking out three men and deliberately proposing to them. If I could go to the States where no one would know me and, just before leaving for Australia, make three formal offers of my hand and heart I felt that life would be worth living. I know you girls will take me for a fool, and perhaps I am one; but the Providence that watches over fools and children was looking out for me, and I met a middle-aged lady from New York, a widow, Mrs. Wood by name, poor, delicate and refined, who had for years been acting as companion to an old cat from Melbourne.

"Now, what could be more opportunity? Here was I, dying to visit New York and needing only a chaperon; here was she, dying to do the same thing and needing only the money. She came of a good New York family and had married a poor artist who had left her destitute; so she knew just the two classes of people whom I wished to meet—the conventional well-to-do and the semi-bohemian. She was heaven-sent.

"Well, to make a long story short, she and I traveled all over the United States and Canada, and in February settled in New York for a long stay. We took the nicest apartment we could find, and all Mrs. Wood's friends called upon us and showed us around. I, as the Australian heiress—my engagement, of course, being kept strictly

private—was an object of some interest to the community, and before long I had quite a circle of friends, thanks to Mrs. Wood's kind offices. Among the men who showed me some attention there were three who seemed to me eminently suited for my little experiment. One, Tom Brown, was a good-looking, jolly college boy, years younger than I; the second, Dick Smith, was a typical brainless, harmless lady-killer, with an immense and unwarranted belief in his own attractions; the third, Harry Robinson, was a solid, eminently respectable business man. You know, of course, these are not their real names. All three were comfortably off, so that my money would not be a great consideration; and all three had been decidedly attentive.

"I thought it out carefully and decided that I would propose to Tom on Monday, to Dick on Tuesday and to Harry on Wednesday. We were to sail on Saturday. I wrote and arranged with the men to call on these evenings. I must confess that though the undertaking interested me tremendously, I frequently had qualms and felt like dropping the whole thing. But I did not.

"I decided to propose to all of them in precisely the same way, using as nearly as possible the same words. I wrote my offer down and learned it by heart. What are you laughing at? I am naturally methodical. It ran as follows: 'Mr. Smith (or Brown, or Robinson, as the case might be), why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?' Then, in reply to his response, whatever it was: 'Because I love you and could not return to Australia without finding out exactly how you felt toward me. Do not think me unwomanly or forward. I felt that I must know. Won't you answer me frankly—as frankly as I have spoken to you?' Girls, please don't laugh! I consider that a very neat proposal for an amateur.

"Well, everything went off like clockwork. Tom walked in on Monday evening—little knowing, poor boy,

what lay before him—and proceeded to discuss the latest play. He talks pretty fast, and I began to fear that I would never get an opening, but at last it came. 'Now or never!' said I, with an inward shudder, and plunged.

"'Mr. Brown,' I solemnly inquired, 'why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?'"

"'I don't know,' he said, startled. 'No bad news, I hope? I noticed you didn't seem quite yourself.'"

"'No, no! no bad news,' said I, seized with an insane desire to get it over. 'It was because I love you, and could not return to Australia without finding out exactly how you felt toward me. Do not think me unwomanly or forward. I felt that I must know. Won't you answer me frankly—as frankly as I have spoken to you?'"

"'I had actually done it. I felt that I had done it badly, that I hadn't delivered myself with proper fervor; but I had done it. What would he say? I watched him intently. Amazement, concern, a sort of fright, not un-mixed with pity—all these fought for mastery. Then, to my utter consternation, his face relaxed and he broke into a hearty laugh."

"'Why, Miss Jean,' he cried, 'I had no idea you were such an actress! Do you know, for a moment I almost thought you were in earnest.'"

"'I am in earnest,' I said; but I said it feebly."

"'Oh, yes! you're in earnest! You are always in earnest, aren't you? Ha! ha! You are the most original girl!'"

"'Suddenly I lost my temper. I was not going to be balked of my beautiful experiment in this fashion. I would be taken seriously."

"'Mr. Brown, I *am* in earnest!' I almost shrieked. 'Why should I joke on such a subject? Mr. Brown, I beg—no, I *demand*—that you give a serious answer to a serious question.'"

"'Poor Tom! He sat for a minute in dreadful silence, the horrible, sickening certainty stealing over him. Then he rose, his face illumined by a ghastly grin."

"'Ha! ha! Miss Jean, you're awfully good fun, but I've got to meet a fellow at the club. I meant to leave long ago.' (He had been in the room about ten minutes.)"

"'You have not answered my question yet,' said I, feeling like a pig."

"'Your question?' said Tom in accents of terror and apprehension. 'Oh, yes—yes, of course; your question. Why—why, Miss Jean, I—I should be very happy, but—but, you see'—a sudden inspiration seized him—'the fact is, I'm engaged already. Yes'—more firmly—'that's it. I'm engaged already.'"

"'But,' said I, in stupefaction, 'don't you remember telling me a week ago that you were not engaged, and that so long as I——?'"

"'Yes—ah, yes,' Tom interrupted, breaking out into a gentle perspiration, 'that is true—very true. But, Miss Jean, you will excuse me, won't you? That fellow is waiting, and——'"

"'Yes,' I replied, trying to look heart-broken, 'you may go. Only promise me, Mr. Brown, that you will never tell anyone what I have said to you tonight.'"

"'Oh!' cried Tom in horror. 'What an opinion you must have of me, Miss Jean. Never!'"

"'Good-bye, then, Mr. Brown.'"

"'Good-bye!' said Tom in a hurry, looking as if he wished himself dead. 'That fellow's waiting, you know—pleasant voyage—hope you don't mind—didn't mean any harm—that is—oh, good night—good-bye, I mean, Miss Jean, good-bye.'"

"'He ran. I collapsed. I laughed till the tears came, and Mrs. Wood, too."

"'What is amusing you?' she said. 'Was that young Brown who just left in such a hurry? Oh, Jean, you are a dreadful flirt! You should not lead that poor boy on so.'"

"'Thus ended my first experiment. My second—that's Dick—was slightly different, as you will see."

"'He trotted in on Tuesday, as arranged. Now he, as I said, is a typical society dandy. He is small, slender, beautifully dressed, and 'the latest

thing' is his craze, whether it be in neckties, walking-sticks or girls. I, the wild and woolly Australian heirless, was the latest thing in girls in his set in New York, and accordingly he had paid court to me unceasingly.

"I was getting into the spirit of the thing now, and the man had no sooner divested himself of hat and gloves and taken a chair than I inquired, gently but firmly:

"Mr. Smith, why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?"

"I do not know," Mr. Smith murmured, 'but I hope'—with a soft glance in my direction—that it was because you wanted to see me.'

"Suddenly my heart sank. Suppose he should accept me! Like Mr. Weller, 'I'm allays afeard of inadvertent captivation, Sammy.' What if he were really in earnest? In that case I should simply have to explain that I was not, and it would be rather an unfortunate situation. But I have a good deal of the bulldog in my composition and, stifling my qualms, I heroically delivered myself of my little formula, word for word.

"Gross darkness of the inner sepulcher was not more deadly still' than little Dick. Minutes elapsed—they seemed hours—during which he sucked his cane and stared at me in silence. Then he removed the cane.

"Poor little girl," he said; 'do you think I didn't see it long ago?'

"I was speechless. 'Poor little girl!' And this from him—that pigmy, whom I towered above! 'Did I think he hadn't seen it long ago?' Seen what? What had I ever said or done to give this tailor's block the idea that I cared anything about him? My rage almost suffocated me. I glared at him in silence, fearing to open my mouth lest unseemly language should proceed therefrom.

"Don't take it so hard!" Dick murmured sympathetically. 'It ought not to be such a blow to you. I am sorry it has come to this. I tried to show you in every possible way that I was quite indifferent, but I did not want to actually hurt your feelings. It is one of

those unfortunate things that cannot be helped.' And the shrimp smirked feelingly at his silly reflection in the glass.

"That was too much. 'Did you—could you—think I was in earnest?' I inquired in tones of suppressed fury.

"In earnest?" repeated Dick, startled. Then a smile of ineffable pity and understanding crept over his countenance.

"Of course you were not in earnest," he said encouragingly. 'Certainly not. I understand. Believe me, Miss Jean, your secret is quite safe with me.'

"I have never been renowned for either discretion or tact—and I have a fluent tongue. For five minutes I talked. At the end of that time Dick rose and grabbed his hat.

"Do you understand me now?" said I, gasping.

"I understand that you have the temper of a virago and the tongue of a fiend," retorted Dick, scarlet with rage. 'It is fortunate'—preening his feathers and strutting pompously to the door—that I am a gentleman and a man of honor; otherwise New York would be ringing with the tale of your unrequited attachment. Many women have loved me, but not one'—with a fiendish glare in my direction—"not one has ever so much as thought of proposing to me before.'

"With which Parthian shot he vanished into the night. Do you want to hear about Harry, now?"

"You don't mean to say that you tried again?" we cried, aghast.

"I started with the intention of proposing to Tom, Dick and Harry on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday," Australia returned stubbornly, "and you ought to know me well enough by this time to realize that on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Tom, Dick and Harry were proposed to.

"Harry was about thirty-five, tall, broad, substantial and well dressed—just a prosperous New York man of affairs. You must have seen hundreds exactly like him. He had not much conversation, and appeared to trot me around more because it was the correct

thing for a man to pay attention to some girl than because he especially enjoyed doing it. I talked to him awhile on various subjects, then sighed faintly, looked fixedly at him and propounded my conundrum: 'Why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?'

"Harry looked amazed, then pleased. 'I have no idea, Miss Cavendish. Is there anything I can do for you—anything you would like to see before leaving New York? I shall be most happy, you know——'

"No," said I firmly, feeling quite self-possessed and natural—how soon one does get accustomed to things!—'no, Mr. Robinson, it was because I love you and could not return to Australia without finding out exactly how you felt toward me. Do not think me unwomanly or forward. I felt that I must know. Won't you answer me frankly?—as frankly as I have spoken to you?'

"Now what do you suppose that man did? He turned purple with indignation, cleared his throat three times, then pompously delivered himself about like this:

"Miss Cavendish, I refuse, I refuse absolutely to listen to your preposterous proposals. Anything so unconventional, so strange, so—so—so—I have seldom heard. My wife, when I have one, must be a lady of irreproachable breeding, the sort of woman who would never, until I proposed to her, give me the faintest idea that she intended to accept me. Until tonight I had—I had—thought of you as that lady. Your demeanor has been most correct, and I appreciated it so highly that I had—I *had*—very impressively—'fully intended to ask you to be my wife.'

"What extraordinary beings men are! I had treated Tom, Dick and Harry in exactly the same way, and yet consider the different conclusions they had drawn from my conduct!

"Well, when Harry had concluded his little song and dance, and paused that the iron might enter into my soul as I gradually realized what I had lost, I felt—not squelched and abashed, as

a well-regulated lady should have done under the circumstances, but thoughtful. Finally I decided that I might as well end the interview.

"If you won't have me, Mr. Robinson," said I airily, 'why, you won't, that's all. So let it rest there. I need not ask that you do not entertain the next man you take a drink with, with an account of my strange, unconventional proceedings.'

"You need not, indeed," returned Harry, evidently pained by my flippancy. 'If you have forgotten what is due to you as a lady, I'—grandly—'have not forgotten what is due to me as a gentleman.'

"Insufferable prig!

"I fear you have," said I coldly. 'Don't speak to me in that strain again, please. All thinking people agree that a woman has as much right to propose to a man as he has to propose to her. Only a stupid, narrow-minded and rather ignorant person could have spoken as you did just now. We will say good night, or, rather, good-bye, as I sail on Saturday, and I am not likely to see you again.'

"I fear not," said Harry in his most gentlemanly accents; and I longed to hurl every china shepherdess and matchbox on the mantelpiece at his irreproachable head. 'Good-bye, Miss Cavendish.'

"Good-bye," said I; and out went my third venture."

"Oh, dear!" said Texas disconsolately. "It's the most thrilling thing I ever listened to, and it's all over."

"Indeed it is not," returned Australia. "There is more to come—not much more, but it will interest you as throwing a fresh light on the subject. On Friday afternoon I received a visit from the Reverend Howlitt Parr. He was interested in raising a fund for sending children to the country, and I had contributed pretty liberally and otherwise helped him along. So he felt friendly toward me and, being a kind old man, had called to tell me—what do you suppose?—that at a stag-party the night before Mr. Thomas Brown had

become slightly exhilarated and had informed the assembled company that I had requested his hand in marriage; whereupon Mr. Richard Smith and Mr. Henry Robinson had indignantly contradicted him, each averring that it was he and he only who had received the offer of my hand and heart. The three had nearly come to blows, but had finally quieted down and agreed that each of them must have been favored with an exactly similar proposal, couched in exactly similar terms. Oh, girls! How sweet I did feel and how I blessed 'whatever gods there be' that this was Friday and that we were leaving New York on Saturday! But I determined to go with the honors of war on my side. My brain worked quickly. There was to be a large entertainment for the Fresh Air Fund that night. I had promised to contribute a monologue. I saw my way clear.

"Mr. Parr," said I, 'I can't explain things now. I thank you very much for your information. I shall be at your concert tonight; I shall deliver my monologue, and I promise you a full and satisfactory explanation of this story. Please tell everyone you know that I am going; it will swell the audience. *Au revoir* till tonight; and thank you again very much.'

"I went to my room. I locked myself in. I wrote and wrote and wrote. When evening came I arrayed myself in the most gorgeous gown in my possession, and, chaperoned by Mrs. Wood, departed for the scene of action.

"When I walked on the stage in my eight-hundred-dollar Paris gown I—yes, I certainly *did* create a sensation. There was a loud rustling and whispering from one end of the hall to the other. Well could I guess the purport of the remarks that seethed and hissed about me. You think I flinched then? Not a flinch. I stood like my own British lion personified, bowed smilingly, and took a comprehensive glance at the audience. Oh, joy! In the distance I could discern the well-loved faces of Tom, Dick and Harry. Nothing more was needed to complete my satisfaction.

"'Ladies and Gentlemen,' I said clearly and smilingly, 'I have been asked to contribute an original monologue to this evening's entertainment. I take great pleasure in so doing; and before beginning, I wish to say that my monologue was written only this afternoon. The title is'—I paused for the fraction of a second and an expression of unearthly and seraphic innocence crept slowly over my speaking countenance—"the title is, 'How I Proposed and was Rejected'".

"Dear girls, I leave you to imagine the unholy joy with which my heart swelled as I saw the effect these simple words produced. The expression on Messrs. Tom, Dick and Harry's faces left nothing to be desired.

"You can guess what the monologue was like. It was a literal transcription of all that those three men had said. Over and over again the roars and violent applause of the audience compelled me to stop. When I finally bowed and walked off, the whole place was in an uproar. Victory, complete and glorious victory, was mine.

"Well, there is not much more to tell. My monologue closed the concert part of the affair, and buying and selling were immediately entered into with renewed vigor.

"I am inclined to think that a person of really retiring nature would have shrunk from descending into the brilliantly illuminated hall and mingling with the giddy throng which vainly endeavored to eat ice cream, express its horror and amazement at my escapades and keep the strenuous salesladies at bay at one and the same time. But I have never been afflicted with that morbid shyness which renders life a burden to some people, and I gladly availed myself of the Reverend Howlitt Parr's arm and escort to a seat not far removed from the vicinity of Tom, Dick and Harry. Dear boys! I heartily forgave them all their misdeeds when Mr. Parr, pressing an ice upon me, burst forth:

"'Oh, Miss Cavendish, you were the hit of the evening. But how *could* you be so naughty?'

"‘Why, Mr. Parr,’ I replied with solemnity, ‘I simply couldn’t help it. It was such an opportunity to plumb the depths of masculine conceit and stupidity and at the same time turn an honest penny for the benefit of the poor little children. For you know,’ I added, raising my voice ever so slightly and gazing guilelessly into space, ‘for you know I really think the *Globe* or the *Diurnal* will be willing to pay me liberally for the privilege of publishing this simple little sketch.’

"Poor Tom, Dick and Harry! Even my hard heart began to melt at the sight of their misery, and I added sweetly:

"‘Perhaps if I receive some whacking good cheques from benevolently inclined private individuals I may not trouble to dispose of the monologue, though I do think it’s good. So true to life! Then, too, while I like to help the poor, I fear that my fiancé may object to this particular mode of——’

"‘Your fiancé, Miss Cavendish?’ put

in Mr. Parr, beaming nervously upon me. The dear man liked me, but I know that he thinks I am about as safe and harmless as an unchained tiger, decorated with bombs. ‘Your fiancé? Do you mean to say——?’

"‘Why, yes, I’m going to be married in August,’ said I pleasantly; and I felt rather than heard the stir among my listeners."

"Is that all?" said I, gasping.

"That’s all."

"It’s enough," Texas thought.

"One thing more, Australia," said Boston, her eyes positively glittering with psychological inquiry, "one thing more. Now you have done it, are you glad or sorry?"

"Glad to have had the experience and sorry to have done it," said Australia, after a moment’s thought. "From a logical point of view it seems all right, but from a feminine point of view it seems all wrong. And what have I to do with logic? I—a woman!"



A SPRINGTIME LOVE

OH, morning skies were fair and blue in spring’s sweet singing season,
And happiness we idly sought with all youth’s fond unreason;
In gardens gay our joy we met, and found in flowerful closes
The love that came with the daffodils—and went away with the roses.

For soon the joyous springtime passed and left our dream Elysian
Only a fancy unfulfilled, only a fleeting vision;
And dead beneath the immortelles of Memory reposes
The love that came with the daffodils—and went away with the roses.

CAROLYN WELLS.



AT THE ASYLUM FOR INEBRIATES

"DO you treat drunkards here?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, I’m one. Where’s your bar?"

STALLED

MAUDE, I love you as I might
 Love a hundred-horse Mercedes,
 But I'm such a bashful wight
 In the company of ladies
 That when for your hand I'd plead—
 At the most important juncture—
 With my hopes at triple speed—
 Whoof! my courage gets a puncture!

If my soul almost uncorks,
 And my vows are all but spoken,
 Then the conversation forks,
 And my steering-gear is broken.
 When I've nerved myself to make
 The sublime, supreme endeavor,
 I can never set the brake,
 And the talk scoots on forever.

With a brimming tank of pluck—
 Gaining power every minute—
 Suddenly I find I'm stuck!
 Tank has leaked—there's nothing in it!
 Or, when I would surely pop,
 Mater comes, and tea's suggested;
 Nails me like a blooming cop—
 Takes my number—I'm arrested!

Talk's the mud in which I'm stalled,
 Like a bashful summer boarder;
 And so often have I called
 With my sparker out of order
 That in rhyme I now aver
 The suspense that I'm enduring;
 Only make me your chauffeur
 And for life I'll take you touring.

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



HIS BEHAVIOR

“HE—”
 “Oh, pshaw! he acts as if he had obtained his table manners from a
 correspondence school for training walruses.”

THE EMPTY SADDLE

By W. C. Morrow

THE wild hammering of hoofs behind me did not immediately seize my notice. I was a stranger in that part of England, and all the witcheries of a hazy midnight moon drenched the highway unrolling before me. The long strides that I was making on this vagabond outing were the foot-strokes of a swimmer in a sea of melted loveliness. A few miles ahead lay the village of Arlington, and I had learned that the good Widow Carter kept there the sweetest inn known to that region. Should a constable take me up on the way for a suspicious character, the sealed papers in my pocket would aggravate my embarrassment. All of these kept the hoof-beats waiting outside my attention.

A horse talks with his hoofs, and I knew the language well. Had the enchantments through which I walked been less engaging, I should have heard sooner the frantic terror that rang loud from the boom rolling through the stillness. Presently I did heed it, and it was one of those sounds to which a man cannot keep his back on a highway, for they more than likely mean peril to some human life. I turned. A splendid animal bore down upon me, his snorting nose high; the flying stirrups of a vacant saddle were beating his flanks.

Something besides the vanity of a man who knows horses determined me to lay my measure here. I stepped in front as he charged up. His sure feet did not slip an inch under his great bulk as he swerved, rearing, and on the moment my leap brought one hand with a slapping grip on his nostrils, and the other on his mane. He struggled

at first, as a spirited horse will in trying out a man. Then his noble terror degenerated into a universal tremor, the note of surrender.

My soothing voice did its offices, the smothering clutch relaxed and the hand-smoothing of his muzzle brought him to a semblance of proud, unbroken resignation. He looked a gentleman to whose throat a footpad held a pistol.

A clear duty was to mount him and ride back to the beginning of the drama, which might be anything from a drunken man to a stark face gazing from the road. Some observations came; so splendid a beast and so elegant accoutrements meant aristocratic ownership. I took the rein in my left hand, my glance found the stirrup-straps fitted to such a six-footer as I, and my right hand slipped over the saddle. Something wet and sticky interrupted the movement, but the moon was too dim to show more than a dark stain on my hand. With eager haste I leaped into the saddle.

My adversary knew that he wore the bit of a loving and merciful master, and hence that my mounting relinquished my control. I could feel his great heart thumping his ribs and his breathing held under a mighty control. But the arrogance that lifted me to the saddle had its inevitable blind side. I tried to swing the beast back, but he had reasons of his own for a contrary course. He knew that I had neither quirt nor spur, and that his bit was a gentleman's. With every trick he sought to unseat me, rearing nearly to toppling, lunging, swerving, plunging, wheeling. At the end he realized that I knew how to sit a horse, even when

powerless to direct him. Then, with long reaches and incredible speed he dashed toward the village.

That was well enough, for he would find his home, and the rescue-search would be only delayed. Of a sudden he left the highroad to the village and swung into an avenue lying in deep gloom under trees. This gave me no concern until I realized that by leaving the middle of this private road he was aiming to drag me off by means of the low branches on the side. To match his wit I was flinging myself flat on his neck, when a limb caught me a blinding smash in the face. But my heels were well dug in, and the blaze that crashed over me found me sick and reeling, but secure. As quickly as my stifling numbness and the tearing branches would permit, I flung forward and hooked my hands in his throat. I could hang on thus till the trumpets overthrew the walls of Jericho—and the beast knew it. He knew, too, the purpose of competent hands groping for his windpipe; and he cleared the trees, dashed into the avenue, and set a race against defeat by strangulation.

The wet and aching numbness of my face made me feel that every feature had been torn away by the trees, and the sickness stealing over me grew thicker, and weakened my hands. An upward glance showed a great house blackly closing the vista. Near it the horse swung aside, and soon plunged into the darkness of a stable. With a loud whinny he entered his stall.

The shadows from a dim lantern immediately began to dance, and the voice of a groom sounded dull in my ears:

"Are you hurt, sir?"

There is no odder experience than finding that one's tongue has lost its function. No more successful was my effort to straighten up in the saddle.

The man set down the lantern and slipped a timidly respectful hand up my thigh to my body. A rustle swished down the row of stalls, and a woman stood beside him, peering up at me fearfully.

"You are hurt, dear?" she said, with difficulty. Judging by her expression, which swam dizzily on the face below, my own must have been horrifying. But a matchless courage held her imperious spirit.

"Quick!" she said under her breath to the groom. "Pull him down; we'll ease him."

My sprawling hands swept the wet and quivering horse as I was gently dragged from the saddle. The man on one side, and the woman on the other, kept me from floundering in the straw, for they held me up and worked me out of the stall.

"Dear, dear!" she cried under her breath, "don't you know me? It is I. Can't you see? I have you again, dear heart! God be praised! Come, lean on me. We will take you to the house." She had seized my hand and was passionately kissing it.

By no effort could I keep my legs.

"Take him on your back!" she commanded the groom.

The man had a task in that, but I knew that his back would break before his obedience. With swaying steps he lurched under me across a wide, tree-grown lawn, following the woman, who led him to a small porch in the rear, unlocked a door and preceded him into the total darkness within. He laboriously began the ascent of a carpeted stair. Smothered flutterings and whispers stirred the blackness.

"I must have a light," he panted. Fear had inspired his demand.

"Sh!" came the woman's warning. "I'll lead you," she whispered. "Don't speak."

In groping for a hold on him her velvet hand found mine, gave it a quick caress, and seized the groom's sleeve. He walked with more sureness then. A turn in an upper corridor brought us to a door, which the woman opened on a faint light.

"Lay him here—gently," she said, closing the door.

She turned up a shaded lamp on the centre-table as the man slipped me to a couch and straightened out my legs, which felt like wooden appendages.

"Go for the doctor as fast as you can," she said, "and tell those maids to go back to bed instantly. Say that your master is here, and is well. Not another word. Wake Donald and tell him to come. Hurry!"

The man went out and the woman flung herself on her knees beside me, put her arms about me, and buried her face in my breast. Through my blurred vision I saw that she was young and beautiful, with the mark of high breeding. Her breast was heaving as she struggled with what I supposed was merely a natural horror to look into my disfigured face.

"Darling," she moaned, "can't you speak to me?"

I made no response. Her fingers ran down my arm and eagerly seized my hand.

"Press my fingers, dear, if you understand."

I am not certain that I had the power to comply, but I do know that some instinct prohibited the effort. She raised her head and gazed with much more than terror into my bruised eyes, which steadily regarded her. She must have seen some intelligent comprehension; but what it, coupled with my unresponsiveness, meant to her, I could not guess further than that the safety of her soul rested on my conduct. Her agony was shaping a new form of pleading, when a light tap at the door was followed by the entrance of a pale, aristocratic young man, in a tumble of incomplete dress. He observed me in astonishment.

"Donald!" she cried under her breath, anticipating his question and springing to her feet. "Come, Frank is hurt. He can't speak. I've sent for the doctor. Come and see—I'm afraid he is dying."

The newcomer was not more than nineteen; he was sensitive and lacked the woman's sureness and courage. After a struggle to conquer his repugnance at the aspect that I presented, he took my hand and laid his ear to my breast. The woman stood waiting in agony. He peered into my face.

"Frank!" he peremptorily said.

It was hard to deny him, but I withheld.

"How is he?" she asked.

"Strong, I think, but badly shaken."

"Try him with a drink of water."

She briefly explained that Prince had brought me home in this condition, and that he had probably run away and taken me through the trees of the avenue.

Deeply puzzled and doubtfully shaking his head, Donald retired. The woman again sank beside me.

"Dearest," she pleaded, "please, please, for my sake, don't tell him the truth! You are safe with me—the blessed God in heaven be praised for that!—and, dear, the awful past is forever gone and forgotten. Dear, dear, can't you bring your generous heart to give me a sign to——?"

Donald opened the door. By all indications he was the woman's brother. He leaned over me, slipped his hand under my head, raised me and brought the water to my lips. It was refreshing.

At the opposite side of the room was a richly carved bed. The woman turned back the covers.

Donald's shaken nerve had grown composed. With great gentleness he and his sister removed my outer clothing, enveloped me in a luxurious dressing-gown, supported my lurching progress to the bed, and made me comfortable therein.

They had a whispered discussion as to whether my face ought to be washed before the doctor came, but Donald opposed his sister's suggestion. They seated themselves at the bedside, and she affectionately held my hand, gently stroking it.

All this time I had been fighting an insidious somnolence. Opposing it was a conscience demanding that I disclose myself; but irresponsibility is beguiling, and a man broken in body is transformed by sympathy into a selfish and helpless animal. Indeed, I cannot say with certainty that my paralysis was fictitious. It is pleasant to salve conscience with doubt. And there must be a reason for the fog over my memory of those hours.

The light was again turned low. The velvet hand filled me with a wonderful content. . . . Very soon I should be able to talk, and then——

A brisk, strong man, who smelled of antiseptics and tobacco, roused me with a swift overhauling, and then came warm water on my face, with cloths deftly handled. The sharp prick of a hypodermic needle somewhere startled me into a transient alertness. I felt as though running a hard race to out-distance something that sought to trip and strangle me. Adhesive things, stinging like leeches, were stretched on my face. At the end my head swung up, glass rattled on my teeth and a kindly, gruff voice commanded:

"Drink."

The draught slipped down and wrangled with internal fires. My eyes, feeling full of sand, dragged open and discovered a firm, bearded face intently studying me. I tried to speak, for I felt able to, but found that my face was heavily padded under wet cloths of an evil odor. My lips were closed.

A glance past the doctor found the lovely woman standing beside a small table covered with a basin and towels. Her brother sat anxiously on the couch.

"He is coming round beautifully," said the doctor.

"Is he conscious?" she breathlessly asked.

"Partly; but he must not speak."

He sent a deep glance at the woman, and, despite her fine self-control, she shrank under it as if it were an accusation. Some intuition appeared to seize the man. He turned to Donald. "Go to bed, lad," he kindly said. "All is well here. Your sister and I will stay."

"Do you insist that I go?" The young man had promptly risen, and he asked the question somewhat stiffly.

"Yes," was the hearty, disarming answer. "There's nothing for you to do. You'll be needed later. Go to bed."

He started away, but a backward glance at his sister found her turned wistfully toward him. He wavered a moment in embarrassment, and then

went and put his arm about her, kissed her forehead and gently said:

"Remember, I am your brother."

Tears flooded her eyes when she withdrew them from his disappearing figure.

"Come and sit beside him," said the doctor to her. "I will visit with Donald. You'll find me in his room if I am needed."

We were alone together. She seated herself and hovered over me. My wits had cleared sufficiently for me to realize the gravity of the situation. It was deplorable enough that I had been so naturally mistaken for another. Far worse were dangers which likely arose out of that situation. The terrified horse and the stain on the saddle meant the urgent need of a return to my initial purpose, when I had encountered the frantic animal. I had been enjoined not to talk, but that was nothing. I had a free hand to tear away the cloths, yet——

"Dear," the woman said, her voice overflowing with love and something besides, "if you understand, press my hand."

I complied, and her face glowed for only a moment, and the shadow returned.

"You dropped his note," she went on, her face paling and flushing by turns. "I was anxious and suspicious, and read it." There came no movement from me, and she timidly regarded me. "It said that you knew where to meet him and that you would recognize him by the white sash around his waist, and that— Oh, dear heart, it was only just before you returned that I saw through his cowardly plot, and then I didn't know how to find you! But God has been merciful and has brought you back to me. I knew at last that he had lured you away to—to end your life. And you knew it, you knew it! You went forth in the pride and glory of your manhood to slay or be slain—for the sake of the woman you loved."

She broke down and sobbed, her face buried in the edge of the bed. After that she raised her anguished eyes and resumed.

"His aim was to make a widow of me—as you knew! . . . He charmed me with his voice, with his eyes, with his subtle flatteries. He made me believe that the life in this lonely place was too dull for me. I listened. I am young and have seen little. He waked the yearning that slumbers in every woman's heart—a blind, unreasoning impulse that time or some great sorrow must drive out as an evil spirit. Dear husband, it was my longing for some emotional experience—the old menace to all that makes a woman desirable and good. Do you understand?"

I pressed her hand, but I could not interrupt her in this sacred moment, though likely the husband to whom her awakened soul had returned was lying cold under the moon. My response thrilled her miraculously. The ensuing pause was heavy with suspense.

"Don't misunderstand me, love," she resumed, with a choking effort. "It was I that made this night possible. I want to know the truth. That is my right, since I am here to suffer and atone. Your hand-pressure will be my answer. You had an encounter with him. You were hurt, but are safe. Is—is he alive?"

My hand lay inert in her trembling grasp. She drew away, her eager hope fading into the blanching of her face.

It was more than a man of my blood could bear. She saw the flame in my eyes and felt the inner strain that tightened my helpless body. That roused her, and she pinioned my arms.

"Be still!" she said. "Whatever has happened, God is just. I must accept what I have earned, and——"

She straightened and listened. Her hearing, acuter than mine, first detected the sounds of a disturbance in the house. Her sweet face was turned in profile. I heard the sounds approaching. There were scufflings and muffled voices; a man was trying vainly to explain. He must have been determined, for a heavy body was dashed against a wall and an impatient hand tried the locked door of the room.

My nurse sprang to her feet, and stood a moment in fearful hesitancy.

"Then he is alive and is hunting you!" she exclaimed.

She ran to a chiffonier, drew from a drawer something that she concealed from me, and with a breathless, "Be quiet, dear; he sha'n't hurt you," ran to the door and stood rigidly confronting it, her back to me and her body concealing what she held in her hand.

The lunge of a heavy man burst open the door. His momentum threw him forward, but, without turning, he closed the door. As he was doing so there came the crash of a pistol-shot, and he staggered back against the wall.

I had seen the spurt of flame from the woman's hand. The man, evidently hard hit, was glaring at her as he swayed. After a moment of horrified stillness the woman flung her arms aloft, and the pistol dropped noisily to the floor.

"Frank—my husband!" she said, and then turned a swift and awful look upon me before again facing the specter against the wall.

He was fighting the shock of his wound, the location of which was disclosed by the unconscious raising of a hand to his right shoulder. His whole appearance was greatly disordered, and from the dark stain on a slash that had opened his trousers at the hip I knew that he had passed through a critical moment to which the stain on the saddle must have borne a relation.

His dazed glance followed his wife's to me. An entire self-command instantly braced him, and, his hurts forgotten, he stared at me with a malevolence that I hope never to see again in a human face. His burning eyes turned on his wife.

"So," he sneered, his voice even and calm, "after luring me out and trying to assassinate me he left me for dead, hastened to you and was considerably placed in my bed!"

"No!" she cried, starting toward him; but his outthrust hand stopped her.

"I can see that he comprehends and that his prostration is a sham," he

went on, with a contemptuous glance at me. "He will therefore enjoy with you my account of his infamy. I recognized his white sash, but before I could dismount the coward's dagger was at work. It missed my abdomen." He glanced at the wounded hip. "As I was dismounting he dragged me backward and I fell heavily on the back of my head. I was partly stunned, but had the presence of mind to lie like a man dying of a dislocated neck as the coward watched over me with his weapon ready. When he thought I was dead he mounted Prince, and I became unconscious."

The woman stood crushed and impotent. Her husband snatched up the pistol and strode toward me, but she sprang out of her trance and threw herself upon him.

"I—I thought it was *you*, my husband. He"—glancing round at me—"was dazed and couldn't speak. His face was so marred that I mistook him for you—and he rode here in that condition on your horse." She was gripping him with a strength that stayed him.

She was also clinging to the pistol; and when he flung her to the floor she dragged the weapon out of his hand and covered it on the floor with her body.

The man's approach to my bed found me unable to move. He snatched the cloths from my face, but surprise arrested him and he started back. As he wavered in uncertainty, the physician and Donald hurriedly entered and looked their consternation. The woman was weakly rising, but the men were too overcome by the specter of the man at my bedside to assist her. High breeding shows first on the tongue; these four persons could set a guard over their speech even when plunged thus into the heart of a dramatic mystery. The two men approached in silence and looked from the husband to me, and back again. A doctor's training is useful in an emergency.

"Come," said the physician to the husband, taking his arm. "You need attention. Donald, bring your sister."

The fury of the wounded man had melted into perplexity. He meekly submitted.

"Remain quiet," said the doctor to me. "I will return as soon as I have attended to him."

It was all that was left me to do, for the scene had shattered my rallying strength. Even had I been capable of movement, remaining still was obviously my only course. The time dragged in an uneasy half-sleep till the doctor came back. His manner was prompt and professional, but I roused sufficiently to see that some deep emotion lay under his calm. He sat at the bedside, studied my face and felt my pulse.

"You need something quieting," he remarked; then, abruptly, "are you a stranger here?"

"Yes."

"Where did you find the horse?"

I explained, and gave a brief account of my hurts.

He nodded in profound and curious interest, and, producing a vial, remarked:

"You were fortunate. That beast is capable of killing a stranger. It is best not to stop a riderless horse in the road. Take this," offering the vial at my lips. "It will make you sleep."

On the instant of swallowing it an awful fear assailed me. Unwittingly I had stumbled into a tragedy. These people were proud. I was a stranger and had blundered into tremendous secrets affecting them. But the doctor had been closely watching me and was ready for the leap that I struggled to make; for he threw himself upon me and shut off any outcry by closing my throat in his clutch. . . . The room swam red, and then burst into a blinding, suffocating flame.

The entrance of a rotund woman, beaming with kindness and bearing a tray, roused me. It was daylight, but the room—typical of a perfectly kept village inn—was darkened. My bed was comfortable, and my clothes were neatly folded on a chair.

"Mrs. Carter?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir. Are you feeling pretty well, sir?"

"Pretty well," I answered.

"That's good. Here's some cold water and chicken broth, sir."

There was magic in the hands that helped me prop myself in bed, and the refectation was delicious, in spite of some hampering soreness.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"About four in the afternoon, sir."

"What time did I come here?"

She kept her face from me in some bustling work about the room.

"You were found on the porch at daylight, sir. Excuse me, sir; I'm called below."

She returned immediately bearing a note sealed with a crest, but not directed. On opening it I found it addressed to me by name and signed with the full name of a woman. It ran:

I write the following at my husband's request and dictation:

Having learned only this afternoon that you had been removed to the inn—the well-meant act of a devoted friend—I hasten to express my profound regret that it was done, and an earnest hope for your early recovery. And permit me, dear sir, to express both my sorrow at the discomfort which you have suffered, and my gratitude that through it has come the restoration of my happiness. It makes me glad to know that what you have learned will forever remain sacred with you, but it will complete the happiness of my dear wife and myself if you will regard our home as your own whenever you may care so to use it, and us among the warmest of your friends.

I have to inform you that the body of an unfortunate man wearing a white sash around his waist was found this morning. He had been thrown and trampled by a horse. Believe me, dear sir, with assurances of—etc.

Mrs. Carter was respectfully awaiting my orders. At my request she handed me my coat, and I discovered that the sealed envelope containing papers relating to my American consulship had been opened.



DEFINED

THE HEATHEN (*a resident of the sea-girt isle*)—I don't quite understand—what is civilization?

THE CASTAWAY (*from the U. S. A.*)—Civilization, my benighted friend, is merely another name for working for a living.



DISARMING SUSPICION

"HOW'S this?" said Cumso to Cawker as they sat down to the annual banquet of the Allied Sons of Liberty. "There's no wine on the menu, but half a dozen glasses are at each place."

"The menu is to take home to our wives," was the satisfactory explanation.



CURIOSITY often hides behind the mask of solicitude.

LE VOL SUPRÊME DE L'OISEAU

DANS la grande forêt au verdoyant mystère,
 On ne trouve jamais, sur la mousse ou la terre,
 Le cadavre des oiseaux morts.
 Cependant, l'oiseau meurt! Quand son libre poème
 Va finir, a-t-il donc une pudeur suprême?
 Va-t-il au loin cacher son corps?

Ses frères lui font-ils de belles funérailles,
 Et, parmi les buissons en fleurs, dans les broussailles,
 Sous le bois, ce temple éclatant,
 Rouges-gorges, pinsons, rossignols et mésanges,
 Menant un long convoi plein de rites étranges,
 L'accompagnent-ils en chantant?

Mais non! Quand l'oiseau doit mourir, il le devine,
 La clarté de l'instinct étant toute divine.
 Alors, pinson ou rossignol,
 Aux prés fleuris, au bois adorable, il adresse
 Un dernier chant joyeux, testament de tendresse;
 Il se recueille et prend son vol.

Il prend son vol tout droit vers le ciel. Il s'élève
 Plus haut que la montagne, et plus haut que le rêve
 Et que le nuage vermeil!
 Puis, dans l'enivrement de sa fuite sublime,
 Plongeant à corps perdu dans le feu de l'abîme,
 Il se fait brûler au soleil!

EMILE HINZLEIN.



OBSERVATIONS

IT is hard to say which is the more difficult—living down a past or living up to a future.
 Experience—the name we give our failures.
 Impulse—what we regret next day.

BEATRICE STURGES.



JONNEY—You wouldn't take me to be a member of one of the richest families in the city, would you?
 CROSBY—No, I don't think I would.
 "Neither would Miss Golden. I asked her to last night."